CHILDREN OF FRANCE

E. MAXTONE GRAHAM

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CHILDREN OF FRANCE

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A ma chère Madame
en souvenir des bons jours
passé en semble.

Marie Louise Bat

THE DAUPHIN (LOUIS XVII)
From a painting by Kocharski at Versailles

CHILDREN OF FRANCE

BY

E. MAXTONE GRAHAM

WITH SIXTEEN ILLUSTRATIONS

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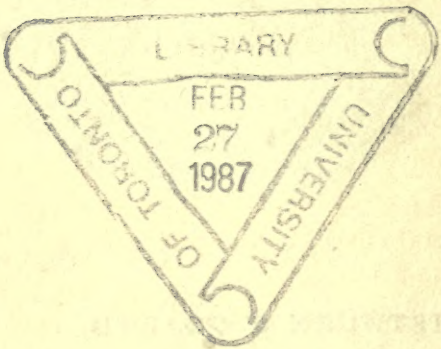

PREFACE

TO those who feel that history should be approached in its large and important aspects, these pages are not addressed. They do not deal only with engrossing political events or with the striking personalities and exceptional characters of French history.

Out of the crowds of far-off lives, certain obscurer groups, moving half-forgotten in the mists of the vanished centuries, are set for a moment in the light, in the hope that they may yield, here and there, some glimpse of human interest and enlightenment. The following studies are intended to appeal to those readers whose attention is rather arrested by personal details of individual life and character, than by chronicles of State affairs, and whose minds are open to the immortal charm of the past, where it can be realized and understood.

The genealogical dates throughout are taken from the second edition of M. A. Franklin's work, "Les Rois et les Gouvernements de la France."

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CHILDREN OF FRANCE

CHILDREN OF FRANCE

CHAPTER I

CHILDREN OF THE RENAISSANCE

THE rise of the Renaissance in France brought into prominence a host of personalities, each with a special claim to remembrance, appealing strongly to the imagination of to-day.

Out of the crowd of arresting figures woven into that rich and varied tapestry those of two children stand forth clearly, a brother and sister, François and Marguerite d'Angoulême. Their memory burns still with a steady flame outshining others, full of the attraction that will always belong to those who absorbed and gave forth the newborn spirit of the hour.

Emerging out of the grim confusions of the Middle Ages, with the light of the Renaissance spirit shining full upon them, the brother and sister were fitted in every fibre of their natures to reflect the dawning splendour, to bear a part in the great drama of their day. They carried within them the seeds of the new existence in all its colour, its fascination, its divine energy.

The record of Marguerite stands alone in history.

With the lapse of four centuries the story of her love for her brother rises into a beauty and completeness that isolates her memory from all the clamour of the time by a hundred distinctive touches.

The children's parentage was royal, for their father was Charles d'Orléans, the descendant of Charles V of France, and their mother was Louise de Savoie, the daughter of the duc de Savoie and Marguerite de Bourbon. The family home was the ancient Castle of Cognac, in the enchanting country of the Charente. Thither Charles d'Orléans had brought his bride of twelve years old, and there, in 1492, when she was sixteen, her first child was born, Marguerite, who was to write her name in golden characters on the records of her time. Two years afterwards, in 1494, came the little son: "My King, my Lord, my Cæsar," his mother calls him in her Journal. This child was destined to reign as François I of France.

Marguerite and François grew up in the tranquillity of home. Their cousin, Charles VIII, was on the throne, but their father and mother never went to Court. The Duc d'Angoulême had taken part in a treasonable rising in Navarre, which shut him out for ever from the royal favour, and he was expected to live in retirement at Cognac or Angoulême. His death in 1496 left Louise a young widow, with the care of the two children. Their guardian was Louis d'Orléans, afterwards Louis XII of France.

Louise de Savoie cherished great ambitions for her boy. From his birth she saw him in imagination on the throne of France. In the eyes of the nation François had only a slender chance of such an inheritance. His cousin, Charles VIII, was a young man, married to a young wife, Anne de Bretagne, and

a succession of royal children [1] came and went, so that for years there was constantly either rejoicing for a birth, or mourning for a baby's death at Court.[2]

Of all the group, only one is clearly seen, the Dauphin Charles Orlando, who died at three years old.

" A beautiful child," writes an old chronicler, " and audacious in speech, not the least afraid of things that other children fear." He was born at Plessis, and held at the font by St. François de Paule, " the Holy Man of Calabria," an unusual honour,f or the Children of France hitherto had been given royal god-parents. The King saw all his four children buried at Tours. Their beautiful Renaissance tomb may now be seen there. The King's outward signs of grief for Charles Orlando soon ceased. " But the Queen of France, called Anne, lamented the death of her son a long time, as much as was possible for a woman to do."

Anne de Bretagne, the Queen first of Charles VIII, and afterwards of Louis XII, is closely linked with Louise de Savoie in the records of history. They were born and married in the same year, and Anne's first Dauphin was born within six months of Louise's little Marguerite. To rear children, in those days of

[1] Children of France were the sons, daughters, grandchildren, nephews, and nieces of the King. All other members of the royal family were simply called Princes of the Blood. The Children of France had the right to sign themselves by their first name, followed by the words " de France."

[2] The children of Charles VIII were as follows :—

(1) Charles Orlando, born 10 October, 1492 ; died 6 December, 1495.

(2) Charles, born 8 September, 1496 ; died 3 October, 1496.

(3) François, born and died in 1497.

(4) Anne, born in 1498, and died as an infant.

ignorance and superstition, was a precarious task, and in this Anne had little success. She lost all the four children of Charles VIII and again three little sons by Louis XII. Two daughters of the second marriage lived, but daughters were of small account, and as years went on, Anne had the bitterness of seeing the son of Louise, the beautiful, high-spirited François, brought up in the expectation of inheriting the crown.[1]

Louise de Savoie, brilliant as a stateswoman, great in love of art and letters, is one of the dazzling visions of the French Renaissance, but the real appeal of her character lies in her relation with her children. They engrossed her thoughts and filled her days. At a time when it was the custom of courts to confide the care of children to strangers, she kept her girl and boy tenaciously at her side.

The girl, Marguerite, possessed a rare combination of gifts, an amazing intellect, linked with a compelling charm. The key-note of her character was love, a love which chose and never altered its object all through life. Her devotion to her brother François is one of the outstanding beacons of history, one of the illuminating facts that will always make understanding possible. The early love seems very natural. Even to-day the boyish figure of François strikes on the imagination with a gay and irresistible charm. But nothing that happened in after life ever shook Marguerite's faithful adoration. Through the mists of the ages it keeps its clearness and its fragrance undimmed. She set herself to love greatly, with the

[1] François succeeded his cousin, Louis XII, as King of France, as great-great-grandson of Charles V, through Louis, duc d'Orléans, his second son.

THE DAUPHIN CHARLES ORLANDO, SON OF CHARLES VIII
From a drawing by Jean Bourdichon ? 1494

love that strengthens in forgiveness. "To love God, one must first love a human creature perfectly," was a saying of hers in later years, and towards the achievement of this ideal her spirit spent itself.

Both children possessed happy temperaments. Full of eager enterprising life in that great flowering time of the world, all the interest and enchantment of the hour gathers round them. Stars in the rising brilliance of the new France, they seem to belong both to a far past and to the thoughts of to-day. In much that they said and did it is possible to feel the absolute understanding of contemporaries, and the centuries fade away in a flood of personal sympathy. At another moment they have drifted far away into the shadows, and great gulfs open between the modern mind and those of these children of the past. They hold in remembrance a host of grim traditions, forgotten by the world of to-day, and even in their ancient standards of glory there is an element that finds no echo any more.

The sudden death of the young King Charles VIII, killed by an accidental blow at his Castle of Amboise, caused a change in the lives of the Angoulême children. Louis d'Orléans, their guardian, was now Louis XII. He caused the family to live at the Castle of Blois, where he was often with them, and treated the little girl and boy as his own children. After a time his manner changed, for he became suspicious of Louise, not entirely without reason, and easily assumed the tyrant. To Louise, self-willed and independent of spirit, the King's interference was nearly intolerable. She never forgave Louis these years of anxiety, when she lived in desperate fear that her children would be taken from her. Night and day she kept them within

sight, causing both boy and girl to sleep in her room, and not suffering them to go even to Mass without her. Her sense of danger was increased in 1499, when King Louis married her rival, the widowed Anne de Bretagne, making her again Queen of France.

The Castle of Amboise was finally chosen by Louis as the home of the Angoulême family. It lies six leagues from Tours, and is built on the summit of a rock. Already grey with age and full of secrets, the place formed a fit setting for the flowering and development of the girl and boy who were to prove so striking a link between the old feudal world and the new ideals.

Under the united adoration of his mother and his sister, the boy François stood a slender chance of growing up unspoiled. His early days were full of the sense of being a divinely chosen being, but tutors were probably able to give him a juster view of life and of his own importance. His first lessons were given him by his mother, but as his powers expanded, scholars were engaged, among others Christopher Longueuil, who was original enough to prefer France to Italy, and insisted in teaching François French history instead of Roman. There was a storm of disapproval from the learned pedants of the day, but Louise approved of the change. A copy-book filled by the childish hand of François is still extant, containing a scrawl of jumbled facts and a list of the Kings of France.

Marguerite soon outstripped her brother in scholarship. Everything came easily to her quick brain, and she learned with little effort Spanish, Italian, Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, studying also philosophy and divinity. The children were surrounded with dis-

tinguished teachers and philosophers. It sounds a little dull and stiff, but both girl and boy were gifted with a faculty for light-hearted enjoyment, a radiant quality of diffusing warmth and light through all their surroundings. It is known that Marguerite played with dolls in company with a little girl named Françoise, with whom the boy François fell in love.

In order that François might not study alone with his sister, a group of little boys came to Amboise to share his lessons and his games. Among these children were Gaston de Foix, the King's nephew, who died at the battle of Ravenna; Charles de Montpensier, the magnificent Bourbon who fell at the siege of Rome; Anne de Montmorency, Connétable of France, who died at the battle of St. Denis. In turn these shining names cross the stage of history, each bearing some tragic or heroic memory.

A very clear picture of French boyhood, with all its knightly aspirations four hundred years ago, is given in the story of another playmate, Fleurange, "Le Jeune Aventureux."

"Now history saith that when Le Jeune Aventureux was eight or nine years old, and dwelling in the house of Monsieur his father at Sedan, this young man, seeing he was of an age to ride a little horse . . . took counsel with himself that he would go and see the world and repair to the Court of the French King, Louis XII, who was then the greatest prince in Christendom. Le Jeune Aventureux, being come to Blois, sent forward one Tourneville to announce his arrival to the King, who was well pleased.

"'My son,' quoth he, 'you are very welcome. You are too young to serve us, and therefore I send you to Monsieur d'Angoulême at Amboise, since he

is of your age, and I think that you will get on well together.' 'I will go whithersoever you may command me; but am I old enough to serve you, and go to the wars if you desire it?' Then spake his liege, 'My friend, your courage is good, but I should be afraid that your legs would fail you on the road. All the same, I promise you that you shall go, and when I start I will send you tidings.' The next day the child was sent to François at Amboise.

"The Sieur d'Angoulême and Le Jeune Aventureux, being almost of the same age and height, were speedily good comrades one with another, and whoever lacked good counsel would soon have found it betwixt these two gentlemen."

A gallant pair of boys they made, absorbed with the amusements, the sports, the quarrels of their age. Le Jeune Aventureux describes some of the games. The boys played at *escaigne*, a kind of Italian tennis, and at *gross boule*, also an Italian game played with an air-ball. They shot with bows and arrows and built little castles and fortifications. In defending and attacking these, desperate battles were fought, often ending in real blows.

Patriotism in its modern form had hardly begun to exist. The ideals of knighthood, as expressed in single-hearted devotion to a liege lord, formed the foundation of the boys' training, and knightly exercises their chief occupation. Fleurange, in later years, recorded his impression of his friend as a boy: "I think there never was Prince who had more various pastimes than my Lord, nor was any fed with better doctrines than those which his mother gave him."

François had an invincible spirit of enterprise and a headlong courage in all these activities.

All his life he never feared personal risk. A dozen times he was nearly killed. His horse ran away with him when he was eight. He was dangerously struck with a stone when playing in the garden at Fontevralt. In the lists at Tournelles he was severely wounded in the hand. His mother left a record of these and other accidents which befell him in childhood. But she had done more than turn the minds of her children to knightly exploit. She realized that the development of the intellect was a greater aim. She surrounded the children with great Italian artists, architects, and sculptors, and with a host of illustrious artificers in the lesser crafts. Literature opened her doors to the eagerly receptive minds. That of Marguerite was peculiarly fitted to absorb the new influences. One of the greatest women in a century of great women, she has been honoured and sung.

" Your royal Marguerite," said a poet of the day, " has always been the road and the path of those who have lost their way, the door at which they may knock."

All her life exquisite things were said concerning her. " At fifteen," says Sainte Marthe, " the spirit of God began to be manifested and appeared in her eyes, in her face, in her walk, in her speech, and, generally, in all her actions." Erasmus said she had " an invincible force of soul." She was " *L'Elixir des Valois*," " *La Perle des Valois*," " *La Marguerite des Marguerites*," and most expressive of all is the saying of an old chronicler: " She was born smiling, and held out her little hand to each comer."

There is no portrait of her as a child, but it is known that in spite of dreamy blue eyes, beautiful fair hair, and a mouth made for wistful smiles, she

had no beauty of feature. Tall and slender in build, her wonderful presence bespoke originality and character, and all descriptions agree in giving her an infinite and magic grace. She possessed, besides, the happiest gift of the gods, a sweet, humorous nature.

Both Marguerite and François were summoned to take a definite place at the Court of Louis XII when François was fourteen. "My son," writes Louise de Savoie in her Journal, "went from Amboise to live at Court and left me all alone." It is easy to imagine the element of light and laughter the brilliant pair of children brought with them to the austere Court of Louis and Anne. There was one little royal child there already, the King's daughter Claude.[1] This child may be said to have been born the bride of François, then five years old, so settled was the matter in the mind of the King, who saw in the match a solution of future difficulties, should he die without a son. Both mothers opposed the idea, but the King never wavered in his intention. He said he would "marry his mice to rats of his own barn," and the two mothers' protests were unavailing.

Little Claude is but a shadowy personality. She is seen so seldom in sumptuous surroundings that her formal betrothal to François when she was six should find record. On 21 May, 1506, a brilliant

[1] The children of Louis XII were as follows :—

(1) Claude, born 14 October, 1499; married François I, 1514; died 20 July, 1524.

(2) A son born about 1500, and died an infant.

(3) A son born 20 January, 1502, and died an infant.

(4) Renée, born 25 October, 1510; married the duc de Ferrare, 1528; died 15 June, 1575.

(5) A son born 21 January, 1512, and died an infant.

company assembled in the great hall of the Castle of Plessis-les-Tours. The King and Queen, all the Court, all the deputies from the provinces, and an array of cardinals and bishops were there. The little *fiancée* was held in the arms of Gaston de Foix, her first cousin. The Chancellor read the marriage contract, and every one present swore to uphold it. Louise, the bridegroom's mother, shed tears of joy when she heard the terms of the agreement, which fully recognized François as the heir of France, and the Queen, who heartily disliked the whole connexion, could scarcely conceal her disapproval. A series of fêtes and tournaments followed. Little Claude is described as good, not beautiful, wise, simple, sweet, straightforward, very pious—a wonderful list of virtues for a little girl of six.

From his earliest boyhood François had the taste for sport of all kinds that seems to have been an hereditary passion in several generations of French Kings. To provide for the boy's pleasure in hunting and hawking huge sums were spent. Most of his leisure time was passed in the saddle. At fifteen Louis XII created him duc de Valois. He could not help loving the boy with all his eager enthusiasms. But he saw with misgiving, for the future of the Kingdom, the reckless extravagance of his ideas.

"*Ce gros gars gâtera tout,*" said he, noting the total disregard of his heir for the dull virtues of economy and foresight. But Louis himself had little consideration for the pockets of his subjects where his own object was concerned. Though Charles VIII had accomplished nothing by his Italian campaign, Louis XII followed his example and set forth to the conquest of Milan.

His people paid dearly for the whim. These Italian wars, so disastrous to France, would naturally form the great interest and excitement of the Courts of Queen Anne and of Louise de Savoie. To the little group of children, Claude de France, and her cousins, Marguerite and François, life would seem a perpetual pageant of armies taking the field, of knights riding forth to the fray, or coming home in triumph with thrilling stories of battle and siege. Uncertain, hazardous, full of colour and change, the glories of life had always been those of war, and the Renaissance had not yet taught a different lesson. Sometimes the grim aspects of the struggle would be brought very close, in rumours of wounds, deaths, and captivities. To the children it was all a natural and inevitable course, for peace was unknown.

Negotiations for the marriage of Marguerite began before she was eight. Henry VII of England, Arthur, Prince of Wales, Henry VIII, and the heir of Spain were all in the list of possible husbands. At twelve years old the child herself flatly refused the English King. She was thinking more of playmates than suitors. A child still, but growing into an enchanting girlhood, she was the centre of the knightly group of boys at Amboise, all full of eager life and boyish devotion.

At seventeen she was married to Charles d'Alençon, first Prince of the Blood, an estimable but very dull young man. It is characteristic that at the wedding the figure of François, then fifteen years old, is more clearly seen than that of the bride. At the banquet he occupied the chief place at table, at the head of the Princes of the Blood. After the feast and the dance the ladies went out on the balcony to witness the

jousting, which was designed solely to provide a triumph for François. He appeared in the lists dressed in cloth of gold, his escort following all clad in yellow silk. The King himself wore this yellow uniform and followed in the boy's train as one of his retainers! Next day François reappeared in white satin, and his sword-play was greatly admired. Very little is recorded of the bride, Marguerite, on this occasion.

In May, 1514, the marriage of François to Claude de France was celebrated very quietly at the Palace of St. Germain. There was no repetition of the magnificence shown at the betrothal. The event made no break in the life of the young man. It did not even disturb his habits for a day. There was no romance or excitement about the affair, for the little delicate girl, plain, lame, and fat, had been assigned as his bride all her life. She is credited with a *grâce à parler*, which went far in making up for lack of beauty. She had just lost her mother, Anne de Bretagne, and every one at Court, including the bride, was heavily draped in mourning. François wore black damask bordered with velvet. Very few were present at the ceremony. Even Louise de Savoie was not there to see her idol married. The day's routine was scarcely interrupted, for, after the service, François went hunting as usual. He was indifferent to the whole affair. His wedding presents to Claude were neither interesting nor princely. They were a four-post bed, a bolster, and a counterpane. Claude contributed the top of a bed, with trimmed curtains of white damask.

The bride went back to her home at Blois in a few days, and her husband returned to his amusements

in Paris. He was with difficulty persuaded to spend a fortnight with Claude late in the summer.

Marguerite, married to a man without ideas, found life very dreary at her new home, in the Castle of Alençon, but it is difficult to believe that her spirits suffered eclipse. Never was anyone so full of the joy of life, so intensely alive to the pleasure and interest of the moment. Now she pursued her studies, and grew absorbed in the double rays of the new light—the great shaft of glory that meant the Renaissance, the great shaft of enlightenment that meant the Reformation. With Marguerite religious belief was never a definite thing; it was not an active and ardent faith in one creed, but a general leaning of the soul upon the mystical consolation of God. Her liberty-loving mind turned by instinct to the freedom of the new thought. Lutheranism did not, at this time, suggest revolt. It was an interesting study among the most cultivated men and women of the day.

She had always loved children, but no child came to brighten the grim silences of the mediæval fortress she called her home. News of events at the Courts of Blois and Amboise would form the chief interest of her days. She must have suffered, with her mother Louise, all the feverish alternations of fear and relief connected with the births of the children of Louis XII. The fortunes of François were constantly in the balance. But the Queen, Anne de Bretagne, died, leaving no living son. Her husband, Louis, was frantic with grief. He arranged an impressive funeral, ordered the grave at St. Denis to be made large enough for two, as he should soon join her, and within nine months married a sixteen-year-old English Princess, Mary,

the pretty sister of Henry VIII. This marriage, with all its possibilities, was a crushing blow to Louise, who records in her Journal:

"The 22nd September, King Louis XII, very old and senile (he was fifty-two), went out of Paris to meet his young wife, Queen Mary. The 9th October was held the amorous wedding of Louis, King of France, and Mary of England."

The anxieties of Louise on behalf of her boy were, however, nearly at an end. The King's health finally gave way under a complete change of habits and the new round of gaieties and fatigues exacted by the young bride. He lived only ten weeks, and then, as he had predicted, was laid beside Anne de Bretagne in the splendid Renaissance tomb still to be seen at St. Denis.

"The first day of January, 1516," writes Louise, "my son was King of France."

The boyhood of François was over, but for years he still loved as much as ever light and laughter and all the happiness of fresh, irresponsible youth. His sunny nature elicited sunshine in others, demanding freedom, enthusiasm, and joy.

One last scene, belonging in its whole spirit to the ancient hazardous impulses of chivalry, forms a fitting close to the story of his boyhood, though it happened when he was twenty, and had just become King.

A great company had assembled at the Castle of Amboise to celebrate a royal marriage. François thought of nothing but how to amuse his guests from day to day. He ordered his huntsmen to take alive in the forest a wild boar of four years old, and to bring it to the Castle.

The animal, a large and savage beast, was duly

captured, and arrived at the Castle enclosed in an oak box bound with iron. François intended a personal combat with the boar, but was dissuaded by the entreaties of his mother and wife. He conceived the idea of erecting stuffed images to represent men, in the courtyard, to see if the released boar would instantly attack them. The galleries surrounding the court were packed with onlookers, and every entrance carefully blocked up to prevent the boar dashing in among the spectators. The released boar at once flew up to the stuffed figures and began to tear them to pieces. For a long time this comedy continued. Then the animal, wearying of the unequal game, began to run round the courtyard. One of the entrances to the gallery was insufficiently blocked up; the boar rushed into it, overturning the barriers, and in a moment was in the crowded gallery. The crowd was so great that the terrified and defenceless spectators could not run away. A dangerous panic was the result. The boar noticed no one in the crowd. It made straight for King François, who, from his position, could easily have saved himself by springing into his mother's room from the gallery, but nothing was farther from his intention. He stood out alone, facing the beast, "to see what it would do." Five or six men rushed forward to stand between the King and the infuriated boar. The King forbade their interference. He drew his sword as the beast sprang upon him, and ran him through the body, to the wonder and admiration of the whole Court. Primitive in his instincts, François loved to play such a part, to dominate, like a hero of old, the whole scene of action. He was made for all the hazards, the adventure, the movement of life.

Imagination catches the flying figures of his "*Petite Bande,*" the company of happy girls with undimmed spirits who were his chosen comrades, hunting with him in the royal forests, dining at his table and charming him with their careless gaiety. High spirits and wit were the only necessary qualifications for a member of the "*Petite Bande.*" But François also had a grave strain in his nature that set him apart. At his lightest he was every inch a king. "He is of a presence so royal," says an old writer, "that without knowing him, or even having seen his portrait, there is not one stranger who would not say when he saw him: 'That is the King.'"

CHAPTER II

THE CHILDREN OF FRANÇOIS I

FRANÇOIS was King. As if the youth of the world were come again, there stirred a freshness in the air of France, a new impetus on all activities. No life in the kingdom was as transformed as that of Marguerite, the King's sister. From the seclusion of Alençon, from the drear dissatisfaction of her married life, she was called to the Palace of Blois, to the side of her brother, not to take a subordinate place, but to play the rôle of Queen in the most sumptuous and brilliant Court ever known.

François may be said to have been the first French King to recognize the power of women, and to admit them not only to his companionship, but to his councils in great affairs. In the past, with some brilliant exceptions, the women of the Court had been shadows. Now the door of political life stood open, and they became moving spirits. François loved the company of women. He would not do without it. He said a Court without women was a Court without a garden, a garden without roses.

All the gifts that make a popular hero had been given by nature to the young King—good looks, a chivalrous bearing, a charming, cordial manner. Well knowing how to use his princely advantages, he rode

about among his people with the frank appeal of his youth, his gallant looks, his friendly sympathy.

For the first time for generations a king was on the throne of France who knew that the whole business of life was not war. François I loved to feel himself borne along on the great flood of learning and art, to give rein to those almost unfailing instincts which inspired him to distinguish what was great and beautiful and worthy of royal honour. France was full of great names, and no man of genius remained obscure if brought into touch with the young King. To François belonged the youth of Pierre de Ronsard and Joachim du Bellay. He called Leonardo da Vinci and Andrea del Sarto to his Court. Benvenuto Cellini worked for him. He welcomed alike Greek scholars and Latin poets, musicians, artificers, architects. He started the collections of the Louvre, and laid the foundations of a great college and of a great library. Building was his master passion, and under his hand and influence rose, in place of many a stern feudal fortress, the exquisite châteaux of the Loire. Inability to read and write had once formed one of the boasts of knighthood, now the cultivation of the intellect became an enthralling aim. All new thought and new enthusiasms found welcome.

But with the hereditary instincts of his race he could scarcely be expected to harbour only peaceful ambitions. He could not forget that he had inherited a shadowy claim to the dukedom of Milan, and his soul turned in a passion of desire to the beauty and charm of Italy.

So, in the same year that made him King, he broke a universal peace, and embarked on the first of his four fruitless Italian expeditions.

His little Queen, with his mother and sister, were sent to Amboise, Louise being made Regent. After his departure, in August, 1515, Claude's first baby was born.[1] It was a girl, and was given the name of Louise. No doubt the national disappointment in the sex of the child was great, but François was meeting with successes in Italy. The eyes of all France were fixed on his fortunes. Interest in the birth of the King's first child was overshadowed by the breathless tension of the moment. A fortnight after her birth was fought the battle of Marignano, a shining conquest for François. The story travelled quickly home, stirring the imagination of a whole people with its touch of high romance, and a worshipping France saw a vision of the victor in his hour of glory, kneeling upon the field, and receiving the order of knighthood from Bayard, the tried soldier, the perfect knight, *sans peur et sans reproche.*

The little Louise should certainly have been a son to carry on the great traditions of the Valois race. Frail child of a child, she lived less than two years. At a year old Charles V of Spain pledged himself to marry her, receiving as her dowry all her father's claims to Naples. Even after the death of the baby,

[1] The following were the children of François I :—

(1) Louise, born 19 August, 1515; died 21 September, 1517.

(2) Charlotte, born 23 October, 1516 ; died 8 September, 1524.

(3) François, Dauphin, born 28 February, 1518; died 10 August, 1536.

(4) Henri II, born 31 March, 1519 ; died 10 July, 1559.

(5) Magdaleine, born 10 August, 1520 ; married James V of Scotland, 1 January, 1537 ; died 2 July, 1537.

(6) Charles, duc d'Orléans, born 22 January, 1522 ; died 9 September, 1545.

(7) Marguerite, born 5 June, 1523 ; married the duc de Savoie, 9 July, 1559 ; died 14 September, 1574.

François continued to address Charles as his son-in-law. The betrothal was passed on to her sister Charlotte, born in 1516.

This little girl, fated to live only a few years, is remembered in history, because she was the special charge of her Aunt Marguerite. Her memory is enshrined in some moving letters and in one tender poem. Charlotte therefore keeps her tiny niche in the records of the Renaissance.

The birth of this second daughter was received with dissatisfaction, but the third child of Claude was the much-desired son, François, Dauphin de Viennois.[1] He was accorded a magnificent christening. The Pope was sponsor, and sent his nephew, Lorenzo de' Medici, to act as proxy. The infant, shrouded in velvet and ermine, was shown to a rapturous people, and all France went mad with rejoicing. A year later, another boy came to fill up the measure of content—Henri, who was fated to succeed his father. Two more daughters and a son were born to Claude before she laid down the burden of life.

It is difficult to form any clear idea of the lives led by these royal children. The family home was at Lyons, but, according to the established custom of centuries, the Court never remained long in one place.

François, in his passion for building, had transformed the ancient and ruinous hunting lodge of his ancestors at Fontainebleau into a royal palace. The surrounding eighty square miles of forest gave plenty of scope for the royal pastime, and the Court was frequently there.

The children were left wholly in the guardianship of

[1] The title Dauphin *de France* was not in use until the reign of Louis XIV.

their grandmother, the Regent, their gentle mother the Queen, and in that of Marguerite d'Alençon, from whom the boys and girls of her well-loved François received most devoted care. Entertainments at Court were varied and sometimes very childish. François had the cast of mind that likes everything on a large scale, and was in his element as a centre of splendid pageants, stately masks and tournaments. But his Court often enjoyed other amusements that seem neither princely nor dignified. The ladies of the Court followed the cruel and absurd Italian custom of keeping in their service, and under a kind of tyrannical protection, human monstrosities, dwarfs, and half-witted persons, whose physical misfortunes were intended to excite laughter and contempt, instead of compassion. The antics of these pitiful objects, who were nothing more than slaves, formed a recognized diversion. A large number of wild animals also furnished sport. The King's account book throws light on some of the uses made of these unfortunate captives. In 1529 the King pays for a bull brought to Amboise to fight his lions—a horrible spectacle for a Court supposed to be in the forefront of civilization. The royal bloodhounds had a valet to themselves, Pierre de Sos, to whom the King gave money to go (presumably on a pilgrimage) to St. Herbert, because of the bite he had received from a mad bloodhound. Rather later, Pierre d'Estais was the governor of the King's dromedary; Laurens Soriot held the same position for the ounce, and Michel Scollier for the lion. Dancers, acrobats, singers, players of farces and moralities, all who could furnish an hour's amusement, experienced the bounty of the King.

All great soldiers, all distinguished men in France,

came to Court, ambassadors from other countries, churchmen, travellers, adventurers.

Every one must be received with splendour and carry away an impression of open-handed lavish hospitality. France might starve, but it was the will of her sons that the Court should seem the richest in Europe.

In these early days of the Valois children at Lyons, or Amboise, the prevailing interest was that of war. The thousand alternations of hope and fear, so ceaselessly agitating the minds all around them, found pathetic echoes in the young hearts of the King's children, to whom tranquillity and routine must have been unknown.

Every now and then the young King and father would come home for a while. The Court, shaken by its distracting anxieties, would blossom out into pleasure and laughter at his wish. For where the King went there seemed to be always sunshine, a sense of well-being and the joyfulness of life. All that was morbid or depressing fled away before that genial and magnetic personality. Those would be the intervals of life most cherished by the children. Too soon Italy would again call to him, and they would see him ride away, with the flower of his knights in his train, leaving the little group of women and children who loved him to the heavy strain of anxiety, the trembling joys and feverish triumphs that made up the tale of their days.

"They are not pleased at your going away. M. d'Angoulême (little Charles) has decided that when once he finds you he will never let go your hand," wrote Marguerite to her brother; "and when you hunt the boar, he knows that you will see he is not hurt."

The elder Dauphin and Henri lacked entirely the grace, the generous spirit, the *savoir-vivre* of François I. Charles, who resembled him in having a flow of high spirits and a gallant bearing, was all his life capable of childish follies betraying a lack of mental balance. Of the two daughters who lived to womanhood, little Magdaleine was a pathetic consumptive, and Marguerite a learnèd intellectual girl, an adoring echo of her Aunt Marguerite. There is one letter still extant from little Marguerite to her father, addressed: "To the King, my Sovereign Lord."

"My Lord, hitherto I have not ventured to give you the trouble of reading my bad writing, fearing to fall short, which I should be very sorry to do, especially towards you, wherefore I have entreated the bearer of this letter to tell you better; I would rather obey you than possess pearls.

"My Lord, I pray God to grant you a happy life and a long one.—Your very humble and obedient daughter,

"MARGUERITE"

For all their amusements and pleasures the Valois children relied on the never-failing love and understanding of Marguerite d'Alençon. In spite of a mind often withdrawn into a world of its own in mystic contemplation, Marguerite was in the best sense essentially a woman of the world, never withholding her recognition of human needs, or losing touch with human sympathy. Lightness and humour were her heritage, no less than depth of thought and feeling. She had the supreme gift of imagination.

It was an age of story-telling, a fashion which could not fail to delight children of any age. Both Louise

de Savoie and Marguerite excelled in the art, and "story-parties" formed a great feature of Court life.

The children, too young to remember the "Field of the Cloth of Gold," would never tire of hearing details of the sumptuous meeting of kings, with the figure of their father dominating the whole pageant.

Other stories would doubtless be those long afterwards woven by Marguerite into her book, the "Heptameron."

Both boys and girls were encouraged to enjoy outdoor exercise, and specially riding and hawking. There seems no evidence that they received the fine education the preceding generation had enjoyed.

The defeat of François I at Pavia marks off a decisive period in the history of Europe. To reconquer beautiful Milan remained always his dream—to this he was ready again and again to sacrifice the best blood and the hard-wrought treasure of France. In 1524 he prepared to set forth again. His mother implored him to abandon the campaign. Before he reached Italy the news followed him of the death of his wife Claude. The King, who had been anything but a faithful husband, received the news with genuine grief. The little Queen had been his playfellow ever since he could remember.

"If I could buy her life with mine," he said, "I would do it with a good heart. I should never have thought that God's bonds of marriage were so hard and difficult to break."

The plaintive personality of Claude is scarcely seen in the blaze of magnificence, the triumph of beauty and grace which centred in the Court of François I. She died at Blois. Neither her husband,

Louise de Savoie, Marguerite, nor her eldest boy were with her. They had all gone to Romorantin to "pass the time," and afterwards to Bourges to let the Dauphin, who was six years old, learn to *faire la cour*. Claude was not accorded a funeral at St. Denis for more than two years after her death. The body of her baby Louise, dead eight years before, was removed at the same time. Both were enclosed in black velvet coffins with blue satin crosses.

After death, the good Queen Claude was worshipped as a saint. The sick visited her tomb and were healed.

"The Queen was esteemed the flower and pearl of ladies," says an old writer of her day, "a true mirror of modesty, holiness, piety, and innocence . . . caring for nought save to serve God and to please the King, her husband."

This year was full of sad events for the family. All the children had measles, a serious complaint in those days. In September, Marguerite writes to her constant adviser and correspondent, Bishop Briçonnet: "It has pleased Our Lord to give Madame Charlotte so grievous a malady of fever and flux after her measles that I know not if He will take her to Himself. The King has enough to think of, therefore this fear falls upon me, and I ask the help of your good prayers." The "little Lady" was ill a month. She outlived her gentle mother a few short weeks. Marguerite concealed the anxiety from the King as well as she could. He was in Italy at the time with his troops. The news of the little girl's death did not surprise him. He thrice dreamed that he saw her, and heard her say, "*Adieu, mon Roi, je vais en Paradis.*"

Marguerite was passionately attached to this child. The tenderest of her poems, "Le Miroir de l'Ame

Pécheresse," was inspired by her love and grief for her loss.

In the following verse Marguerite appeals to the soul of the little child :—

"Répondez moi, ô douce âme vivante,
Qui par la mort, qui les faus épouvante,
Avez été d'un petit corps délivré,
Lequel, huit ans accomplis, n'a su vivre;
Dites comment en la cour triomphante
De votre Roi et Père êtes contente,
En déclarant comme amour vous enivre,
Répondez moi !
Las ! mon enfant, parlez à votre tante
Que tant laissez aprés vous languissante.
. . . . . .
Pour soulager ma douleur véhémente,
Répondez moi ! "

The little soul of Charlotte replies :—

"Contentez-vous, tante trop ignorante
Puisqu'ainsi plait à la Bonté puissante
D'avoir voulu la séparation
Du petit corps, duquel l'affection
Vous en rendait la vue trop plaisante.
Je suis ici belle, claire et luysante,
Pleine de Dieu et de lui jouissante ;
N'en ayez deuil ni désolation.
Contentez-vous ! "

Remote and tranquil, the memories of this little child float across the centuries. It is wonderful that her life, so quickly spent, should leave any trace in the midst of the passions and alarms of war, the huge clamour of a nation threatened with disaster. She died at seven, having lit a tender and undying flame of memory that nothing could tarnish nor efface.

There exists one other echo of Charlotte. It is to be found in the account book of her father, François, when he bestows a gift of 100 *écus*, " to the little dwarf belonging to the late Mademoiselle, to help her to get married."

François had recaptured Milan, but the victory was soon swallowed up in the dark defeat of Pavia. To Marguerite the defeat meant more than the ruin of her brother's schemes, more than loss to her country, more than a national humiliation. The blow shattered her life. François, perhaps more from love of his sister than from a sense of fitness, had elected her husband, Charles d'Alençon, to lead his vanguard in the field. Owing to incompetence and panic, he failed to come to the rescue of the King. Moreover, after the battle, he ran away. All the greatest soldiers, the flower of France, were either captured or killed. The King himself was taken prisoner. The unfortunate Alençon was one of the few who came to no harm as he led his handful of survivors pell-mell across country back to France.

" *Tout est perdu fors l'honneur,*" wrote François to his mother. The whole soul of Marguerite was stricken to the dust. To her it seemed as if honour was lost too. It was torture to know that her husband was among the execrated *fuyards de Pavie.*

Luckily for the wretched Alençon's reception at Court, he rode back ill, body and soul sick unto death with misery and humiliation. The moment Marguerite saw an object of pity her compassion went forth. She had never loved her husband, but she could not help stretching out a hand to relieve weakness and adversity. Instead of the discredited soldier she saw the dying man. He lived a few weeks,

comforted and sustained by her care and her forgiveness.

Then her whole energies were given to saving the King.

The news of François was very disconcerting. Taken prisoner on the battle-field by Charles V, he endured a rigorous captivity which lasted for thirteen months, being only allowed to go out riding on a mule, accompanied by a guard of soldiers. Accustomed all his life to much fresh air and exercise the prisoner soon lost his health.

The chivalric figure of François in captivity appealed to the imagination of the whole world. His enemies joined in a chorus of admiration. Romantic Spain went crazy over her interesting captive. It became the fashion among the Spanish ladies to cherish a hopeless passion for the French King. When he rode about Madrid, sorrowful and dignified, he was followed by enthusiastic crowds. All this was very unpleasant for his captor, Charles V. His annoyance made him still more hard and unyielding. He would not let François go without an immense ransom. He demanded Burgundy as the price of his liberty. This price François, though broken in health and spirits, would not grant.

It was finally decided at the French Court to send the King's sister, Marguerite, to intercede with the Emperor. It was a difficult and rather perilous enterprise, but Marguerite travelled to Spain without delay.

" Whatsoever I can do in your service," she wrote to her brother, " were it to scatter to the winds the ashes of my bones, nothing would be to me either strange, or difficult, or painful, but consolation, repose, and honour."

In spite of her desperate anxiety to win her brother's freedom, her embassy failed, and she was obliged to hurry back to France.

François made his own treaty at last. Sick of his long imprisonment, his resolution was beaten down. He agreed ingloriously to yield Burgundy to the Emperor, to marry his sister, Eléonore, the widowed Queen of Portugal, and to send into Spain as hostages his two little sons. These articles of treaty he meant to regard as sacred, except the point about Burgundy —that part of the bargain he never intended to keep.

" A captive in bondage," he said, " has no honour, and can bind himself to nothing."

François, reared in an atmosphere of worship of ancient heroic knighthood, did not know what honour meant. All his life his disregard of treaties lowered the whole standard of political conduct throughout Europe. Yet his name was associated among his contemporaries with the highest ideals of courage and chivalry.

Still more difficult to understand is his action as a king and a father, in taking his two little sons from their shelterd nurseries in France and yielding them to the grim mercies of the jailers in a Spanish prison. The whole story of the ransom is inconceivable to the mind of to-day. He bought his liberty at far too dear a price, but no misgiving seems to have crossed his mind. He was needed in France and delighted at the thought of recovered liberty. No harm, he thought, would come to the boys.

CHAPTER III

THE BOY CAPTIVES

THE sons of France were at Amboise when the news came. All the children were ill at the time with another attack of measles. Marguerite's letter about them gives the only glimpse of the whole family group together.

"Monsieur d'Angoulême (Charles, then aged four) took it with a very bad fever; and then M. d'Orléans (Henri), but he was not so ill; and then Madame Madelaine, but very slightly; and lastly, for company's sake, M. le Dauphin, without either pain or fever. And now they are all quite cured and very well. And M. le Dauphin is doing wonders at his lessons, mixing with his schooling a hundred thousand other occupations; and there is no more question of flying into passions, but rather of all the virtues. M. d'Orléans is nailed to his books and says he will be good; but M. d'Angoulême knows more than the others, and does things which seem more like prophecies than a child's play; so much so, my Lord, that you would be astonished to hear them. The little Margot (aged three) is like me; she will not be ill. Every one tells me of her wonderful grace; and she becomes prettier than ever was Mademoiselle d'Angoulême."

The King's order that the two eldest boys be sent

to Spain roused an outcry of grief on the part of their grandmother Louise de Savoie—but there was no thought of averting the sacrifice.

The English ambassador, Dr. John Taylor, chanced to be at Court at the time, and saw the two boys who were to give up their liberty. Afterwards he wrote to Wolsey: "She (the Regent Louise) caused me to dine with the Emperor's Ambassador, and after dinner I was brought to see the Dauphin and his brother Harry; both did embrace me, and took me by the hand, and asked me of the welfare of the King's Highness and your Grace, and desired that in my writing I should truly commend them to the King and your Grace. Verily they be two goodly children. The King's godson (Henri) is the quicker spirit and the bolder, as seemeth by his behaviour."

The two "goodly children" were delicate boys, one just eight years old, the other not quite seven. They started next day for the Spanish frontier, where they were to be exchanged for their father. It was a strange scene at the Bidassoa River, the boundary between the French and Spanish kingdoms, at seven o'clock in the morning of 17 March, 1526, when the two little princes and King François were exchanged on a raft in the middle of the river. The King embraced his sons, and then was rowed over to the French shore.

"Now I am King—I am King once more!" he cried, and rode away at a gallop.

The two boys, on their part, handed over to grave Spanish officials, could have felt no elation—nothing but the blank and silent misgiving of children going forward into the unknown. Their destination was Vittoria, where they were to join their father's bride,

Eléonore, andto be under her protection. Then, when François had fulfilled the conditions of the Treaty of Madrid, they were to return with her to France. The Spanish captivity was only to mean for the children an honourable detention—a pleasant sojourn in a new country, with royal entertainment, and then a triumphant return to a delighted France. This was doubtless the programme promised to the poor little boys. What really happened was very different, and the events of the next few months were to leave their indelible mark on the minds and characters of both children.

François did not keep his bargain, and would not cede Burgundy. War followed, and the sack of Rome, and then the last French campaign in Italy that finally exhausted the resources of France. Two women contrived the final peace, Louise de Savoie and Margaret of Austria. At Cambrai, in July, 1529, they drew up the treaty called *La Paix des Dames*. The conditions of this peace included the ransom of the young princes. But it was not signed until the boys had suffered captivity for more than three years.

During those three years no one from home saw the poor children. When François broke faith with the Emperor his action was visited on the little hostages. They were taken away from the care of Queen Eléonore and sent to the Castilian fortress of Pedraza. They were now surrounded only by Spaniards, and these not educated men, but rough soldiers and jailers. No one from the outer world was allowed to see them, and they were ceaselessly watched.

After the Treaty of Cambrai permission waso btained for a servant in the household of Louise de Savoie, a

man named Bodin, who could speak Spanish, to visit the boys at Pedraza. He describes his first visit thus :

" They led me into a rather dark chamber of this fortress, which had neither tapestries nor hangings of any kind and only straw mattresses. In this chamber were my said Lords, seated on little stone seats opposite the window of the said chamber, which is furnished both within and without with solid iron bars, while the wall is ten feet thick. The said window is so high that only with great difficulty can my Lords enjoy air and light. It is a place where persons accused of grave crimes might well be detained, and most wearisome and unhealthy for those of the young and tender age of my Lords. They were poorly clad in a sort of black velvet riding costume, with black velvet caps without silk ribbons, or ornaments of any kind, white stockings and black velvet shoes. It was impossible for me to refrain from shedding tears."

Bodin then spoke in French to the unfortunate little prisoners, telling them of the treaty of peace which was to release them. Not one word of their native tongue could either boy understand. Bodin then explained himself in Spanish, and asked the Dauphin François if he had forgotten French.

" How could I remember it," said the child, " when I never see any of my attendants with whom I can speak it ? " The little duc d'Orléans recognized Bodin, and said, " Brother, this is the Usher Bodin." The Dauphin then said that he too recognized him but feared to say so. Then came a torrent of questions about home, the King, their grandmother, their little brother and sisters, and their special friends at Court. Though they had forgotten French, they had not forgotten France and all the joys of home, the light,

the laughter, the excitements of the old life. Not one word of news had reached them in their dreary exile. The bitter cruelty towards these innocent sons of France seems incredible now. It was an outrage even for those days, and has left a lasting stain on the honour and humanity of the great Emperor.

Playing with two little dogs, says Bodin, formed the children's chief pleasure. There was no attempt at education. The Dauphin spent his time in modelling little figures in wax.

On his second visit to the prison, Bodin brought each boy a velvet cap with gold ornaments and white plumes, but the Captain of the Guard snatched them away, nor was Bodin allowed to measure the height of the boys for the information of their father.

When Bodin carried his report back to the French Court there was a storm of indignation. The King and his mother brought influence to bear, through Margaret of Austria, the aunt of the Emperor, and obtained better conditions for the wretched children. Their French attendants were restored, and proper dress was supplied, but their imprisonment lasted four months longer, on account of the difficulty of raising the amount of their ransom from the impoverished resources of France.

Immense precautions were taken by the Spaniards to ensure that the ransom money should be paid in full. They had no reason to trust the honour of the French King. The exchange of the gold for the boys was made again on the river Bidassoa, each side embarking in barges at the same moment.

The *Connétable*, on finally parting with his charges, made formal and wordy apology to the Dauphin,

begging his pardon for all he had done to keep him in safe custody. The Dauphin received the apology with the grave and stately courtesy which was the only thing he had learned in Spain, and made a dignified and suitable reply.

The *Connétable* then turned to Henri, the younger boy and the bolder spirit, and with an equally serious air repeated his speech. Henri could not resist giving the rein for one untrammelled moment to his resentment of past treatment. Instead of speaking to the Spaniard in royal fashion like his brother, he replied with a noise expressive of contempt.

It was an unexpected ending to the stately piece of official ceremonial.

After endless delays the gold reached Spain, and the little boys were in France, in the care of Queen Eléonore, who had journeyed to Fontarabia to meet them. They rode in her litter through the towns of a rejoicing France, and were received everywhere with elaborate fêtes. Sometimes the boys descended from the Queen's litter and rode on ponies. The people wept with joy to see them, calling them "*Fleurons de France, beaux anges.*"

The cavalcade reached the Court at last, and François saw his boys after three years' absence. They were much grown. In spite of the rigours of their imprisonment, the want of fresh air and exercise, they had come back apparently none the worse physically. But a greater mischief had been done. The little sons of France were Spaniards, with all the impenetrable reserve, the rigidity, the punctilious regard for trifles of etiquette, belonging to Spanish training. Four years of life in Spain at the most important time of

FRANÇOIS, DAUPHIN DE VIENNOIS, SON OF FRANÇOIS I
From a drawing by François Clouet

their careers had completely undermined the natural gaiety, the fresh candour of these children, who had begun life under the sunny influence of Marguerite d'Alençon. All lightness, all grace had departed. The Dauphin was the least changed of the two. The stronger character of Henri suffered the most. It is said that he never recovered his spirits, and that no one ever heard him laugh. These sombre children were not to the mind of the light-hearted François. He said he did not care for dreamy, sullen, sleepy children. He turned his affections to his third son, Charles, then eight years old, who, not having endured the hard experiences of his elder brothers, was a boy more after his own heart, high-spirited, alert, and gay.

During the three years of the Spanish captivity changes had happened at Court. The lives of the children would be specially affected by the re-marriage of their Aunt Marguerite to Henri d'Albret, the young King of Navarre. She went away with her young husband, eleven years younger than herself, to live in her new kingdom in the province of Béarn.

She who had so faithfully and devotedly taken care of the children of her brother, was now to have children of her own. She was ready to welcome the little ones with a passion of joy and tenderness. Through her children she was fated to know sharp suffering.

Her daughter Jeanne was born early in 1528. Two years later, at Blois, a little son followed, who lived only two months.

The death of this boy shows King François in a new light. We see him at his best, his greatest, his

tenderest in the flood of his love and sympathy towards his sister. The memory of this child is enshrined in the letter he wrote in reply to hers, which ran as follows :—

" MONSEIGNEUR,—As it has pleased God to draw unto Him him whom it has pleased you to call your *petit-fils*, and as you did him the honour of rejoicing at his birth into this world, fearing that you and Madame[1] may sorrow at what has happened I humbly supplicate that you will both rejoice in his glory, without any sadness, for if it please the Lord to give you both good health any other tribulations will be easily borne. I assure you, Monseigneur, that the father and mother accept the will of Him who can give them others to serve your Majesty's children, but we pray more than humbly that we may be always in your good graces. Begging you, Mons., to pardon me for not having written sooner and at greater length.—Your humble obedient sister,

" MARGUERITE "

" MY DARLING,"—the King wrote in reply—" If fortune had not tried our resolute patience through all these years, I should say she was right to make fresh proof of her power. But having learned by some experience that what is mine is yours, she should also have considered that what is yours is mine. And so, since you bore the pains of death when my—your—first children died, it is for me now to bear your pains as if they were my own. . . . This makes the third of yours, and the last of mine, whom God has called unto His blessed company. They have gained with little

[1] Louise de Savoie.

labour what we desire with infinite travail. Forget your sad tears in obedience to God."

Marguerite showed outwardly a perfect resignation. Instead of funeral hymns, in the churches of Alençon, she ordered that " Te Deums " should be sung, and the city was placarded with the words: " The Lord gave. The Lord hath taken away."

But from the day of the baby's death she wore black, which she never again put off.

The following year brought another bereavement. After years of failing health Louise de Savoie died, leaving her children, François and Marguerite, with a sense of desolation in her loss—she was so great a power in the State, so firm a counsellor, yet so intensely loving a mother. It is improbable she would have sanctioned a certain action of François towards his sister shortly after her death, which again forms one of the inexplicable incidents of the past.

At one moment it is possible to realize that François is vividly human in his feeling and his sympathy, at the next that he is cold, hard, and implacable. We read with amazement that he actually decreed the separation of Marguerite's little daughter Jeanne from her mother. He shut her up in the Castle of Plessis-les-Tours, and had her reared there. He must have known what the separation meant to such a heart as that of Marguerite, yet he carried through the plan, in his double fear of the reformed principles of both the mother and father, and of the chance of a marriage for the child with the heir of Spain. It is difficult to see how the loyalty of Marguerite stood such a test. But even in such sharp distress she held to the faith of her life. Her King could do no wrong.

The story of Jeanne d'Albret supplies the most vivid of all the pictures of child-life in the sixteenth century, for the small daughter of the gentle and yielding Marguerite carried in her alert little body and mind a personality that was to leave its mark upon her country. After the death of the little brother no other child came to the Queen of Navarre to dispute Jeanne's sovereignty, for the twin sons born in 1540 did not outlive the first hours of babyhood. The child was always passionately determined to have her own way. Her wilfulness must have had its attractive aspect, for she was known as "The Darling of Kings," because her father, the King of Navarre, and her uncle, François I, petted and indulged her. The figure of Jeanne is much more definite and clear than those of any other royal children of her century. All her ideas were fixed. She knew what she wanted, and showed excessive resolution in getting it, if she could. Her mind was a stranger to the speculative thoughts of Marguerite. Her young judgment saw everything plainly defined. She absorbed the new ideas of reform without misgiving, and clung to them austerely all her life.

At eleven years old François decided to marry her to the duc de Clèves, an ally of his own, with a claim to the Spanish crown. Jeanne flatly refused. "I would rather throw myself into a well," she assured him. François, with all his persuasive charm, could not shake her resolution, so he sent her home to her parents, with instructions that the marriage must be arranged. Marguerite does not come out very well at this point in her story. It is said she allowed the child to be beaten till she consented. If this be true of the most humane and enlightened woman of her day, it is

evidence that her devotion to her brother had reached the point of insanity. The little girl called together the chief officers of her household and read a solemn protestation. Nothing helped, and the ceremony of marriage took place in the ball-room at Châtellerault. Jeanne rebelled to the last, and had to be carried to the spot. She went home with her parents after the wedding. In the end she triumphed, for the duc de Clèves broke faith with François, who thereupon got the marriage annulled, and Jeanne was left in peace.

Soon she was to play a conspicuous part in the unfolding drama of France, for Jeanne was fated to marry Antoine de Bourbon, and to be the mother of the great Henri IV of France.

Marriage projects for his own children soon engrossed the mind of François. Before his little son Henri had left his Spanish prison he was the object of political intrigue. François had by no means lost his passion for Italy. It suited him at the moment to force an alliance with the Pope, Clement VII, and so regain a footing there. The Pope had control of a valuable asset in the person of an orphan cousin, whom he called his niece, the young daughter of Lorenzo de' Medici. François of France proposed as her bridegroom his second son Henri. The Dauphin was still unmarried. Doubtless there were schemes for a marriage of European importance for the heir to the great kingdom of France, but an inferior match, if a large fortune went with it, would do for the younger son. After endless negotiations the scheme took shape in 1531. Henri was fourteen years old, and the bride Catherine was within a few days exactly the same age, when the marriage was celebrated at Marseilles, 28 October,

1533. A brilliant company assembled to witness the first wedding in the royal family. The boy bridegroom, with his fine dark eyes and straight features, sombre and aloof, made little impression. The personality of the little bride, pale, slight, and silent, was lost in the dazzling array of the great powers of Church and State blossoming into magnificence of ceremonial. Imagination sees only the sumptuous figures of King François and the Pope, throwing all others into the shade. Little dreamed any of the throng who watched the pageant that in the person of the silent girl-bride Italy had sent a great power to France, a commanding intellect, an imperial will that was to control the fortunes not only of the Valois family, but of the whole nation, and profoundly affect the politics of Europe.

After the wedding, Catherine de' Medici took her quiet place in the family. The young couple had no establishment of their own, but shared that of the Dauphin and Charles, duc d'Angoulême, at Amboise or Blois or Fontainebleau. Catherine even shared her personal attendants with her little sisters-in-law, Magdaleine and Marguerite. This would seem no hardship to Catherine, for all were boys and girls together, too busy with amusements and play to trouble about questions of Court etiquette.

Catherine has been described as " very submissive." No one ever penetrated to the depth of that strong and secret nature, or in those early days suspected the burning ambitions of her soul. She was yielding and unassertive because intuition taught her that submission was the strongest weapon at the moment. Completely winning the heart of her husband's father, the King, by her quiet wit, her tact, her

love of hunting, she became his constant companion.

Catherine de' Medici invented the present mode of side-saddle with the pommel. Before this women when riding had their feet on a board hung from the saddle. She also introduced the wearing of tightly drawn silk stockings, which had been unknown. She was herself proud of a very shapely leg, which these fashions were designed to exhibit.

Soon she was a member of his "*Petite Bande*" of gay, high-spirited girls. Craft taught her to laugh with the rest, though her laughter did not come from the depth of her nature. To please the King, to make herself a desired companion, she showed a gallant spirit. François, with his large-hearted protection, would be needed ere long. To win him as a champion was for the moment of far greater importance than to win her husband Henri, the silent, morose boy, with his Spanish instincts, his slow development, his cold, repellent manner.

Another break in the royal family came in the year 1536, not a marriage this time, but a crushing blow for the King and the nation—the death of the eldest son of France.

François was once more at war with the Emperor Charles, who had invaded Provence. The King left Lyons, where the Court was then in residence, and went to Valence to be at hand if it became necessary to take the field.

The young Dauphin François, then a boy of nineteen, was all anxiety to take part in the campaign. He was left at Lyons, where he eagerly awaited the order to join the forces.

It came at last. The day before he was to start he

was at the Château of Tournon playing a game of tennis. The day was hot, and he asked one of his pages to bring him water from a well. The page fetched the water in a Portuguese pitcher said to be made of a peculiar clay which kept water cool, and yet prevented any injurious effect. The Dauphin, tired and overheated, put the pitcher to his lips and drank almost the whole contents at a draught. He was almost immediately seized with severe illness, which ended fatally in a few days.

At first no one dared to tell the King. It was known that the death of the boy would cause him an intense and lasting sorrow, and indeed his spirits never wholly recovered the blow. In Europe at this time, suspicion of poison always attached to any sudden death, or to one that happened without a very clearly defined cause. Modern science would easily account for the poor boy's fatal illness, but three hundred and fifty years ago, if any doubt arose, it was usual to fix blame on some one. In this case suspicion of having used Spanish poison fell on an unfortunate and doubtless innocent companion of the Dauphin, Count Sebastiano di Montecuculi, his cupbearer, who was barbarously executed two months later.

Henri was now the heir of France. "He seems all nerve, he seems so strong and tall," says a Venetian ambassador, "but he is dark, pallid, livid, even green, and it is said he was never seen to laugh a hearty laugh. Still he is, in his way, a good companion to his own friends, and loves the liveliness of his younger brother. He has a small head, large eyes looking down, thin temples, and a narrow forehead. He is brave, and loves hunting and fighting; and he is very religious, and will not ride on Sundays."

François was at Lyons with his family, bitterly grieving for the death of his son. He roused himself to take an interest in negotiations for the marriage of his eldest surviving girl, the pretty and fragile Magdaleine, whose short career forms one of the most pathetic stories of all the Children of France. She was born immediately after the "Field of the Cloth of Gold." Her first misfortune was the death of her mother, Queen Claude, when she was four. In the same year there was a proposal to betroth her to James V, the young King of Scots, who was thirteen years old. The defeat of Pavia showed the weakness of France, surrounded by enemies, and in the eyes of the Scottish nation altered the importance of the French King's daughter. The idea of the marriage was abandoned. Years afterwards, in 1533, when King James was in France on other business, it is said the Dauphin Henri met him by chance, and brought him to Lyons, hoping the gay humour of the young man might help François to shake off his depression. In this way James and Magdaleine met for the first time. Magdaleine's heart surrendered at once to a suitor so gallant and handsome, with such endearing ways, and invested with all the romantic charm attaching to his unknown northern kingdom. James appeared in great magnificence, his dress rivalling in reckless luxury those of the most splendid of the French courtiers. In joust and tournament he proved himself a match for the strongest and most skilful. He was a hero of romance, an ideal knight, in the eyes of the ardent girl. Her health at the time was so bad that her father suggested betrothing James to Marguerite, his younger daughter, who was, according to a Scottish chronicler, "ane young lady of pleasant beauty, goodly favour, and

comely manners." But James would have none but Magdaleine.

The marriage contract of King James and Magdaleine was signed at Blois, 26 November, 1536. The fragile bride glowed with happiness. She loved James, an unusual circumstance in royal marriages, and also her girlish ambition was satisfied. " I shall be a Queen," she said. She looked eagerly forward to the adventure of a new life in a new country. They were married in Notre-Dame, 1 January, 1537. All the royalty and nobility of France were present, and many courtiers from Scotland. Magdaleine made a dainty picture on her wedding-day, with her small, delicate features and long throat, in the setting of her gorgeous dress. She wore white damask embroidered with gold, finished at the throat with a double ruff and a collar of precious stones. Her girdle was all of gems. She wore a cap formed of a network of pearls and precious stones, and a necklace of large pearls. The bridegroom's attire certainly did not reflect the extreme poverty of Scotland. He wore a mantle of dark blue velvet, trimmed with sable, and hose of white satin, making a splendid appearance. The bridesmaids wore white and gold, with green sleeves.

The bridal song was written by Ronsard, then a page in the royal family.

James and his bride remained in France for four months after the wedding—four months of fêtes, of splendid gifts, of enthusiastic welcome on all hands. Everywhere Magdaleine in her youth and pathetic fragility made a strong appeal to the sympathies and affection of the people. The gallant air of the King of Scots won their hearts. Blossoming out into capacity for deep enjoyment, the delicate girl found

herself for the first time a centre of interest. Her innocent wish was fulfilled. She was a Queen.

The time came to carry her away to her husband's grey kingdom of the North. With her Maries (as the maids of honour were called), her poet Ronsard, her husband, and her escort, the French Princess and Scottish Queen landed at Leith in Scotland on 19 May, 1537. The bride knelt, as soon as she landed, and kissed the soil. A strong emotion filled the hearts of her Scottish subjects. She was called " the pleasant Magdaleine," " the sweet Flower of France." She passed to the royal palace of Holyrood. It was a cold, damp spring, and it is unlikely that the ancient palace held many of even such luxuries as were known to France in the sixteenth century. She was determined to be happy, unlike her Maries, who were very discontented with the Scots simplicity of life; but the climate soon brought an accession of ill-health. Change of air to St. Andrews was advised, and she was removed to the Abbey of Balmerino on the Firth of Tay. But the King could not leave Edinburgh at the time, and she could not bear to stay away from him. She returned to Holyrood. Her father sent his own physician from France, but she was beyond all aid. The young King, with the clear sight of devoted love, realized her condition. He shut himself up with the sick girl until the end, and she had the happiness of knowing and proving his deep affection. On 10 July, 1537, she died, forty days after landing in Scotland, and was buried in the chapel of Holyrood. She was sixteen years old.

Such is the short and poignant story of Magdaleine.

One of the very few Children of France who ever knew personal and unclouded happiness, the news

of her death brought bitter grief to the sad Court of her father François. A cloud of melancholy, cold, stern, estranging, settled over his once radiant spirit.

He sent for his sister Marguerite. She came to the Louvre from Alençon, roused him from his torpor, and by the very energy of her love forced him to take his place again at the helm of State. She set herself to amuse and distract his mind, and in a hundred ways of love and sympathy succeeded in calming his nervous restlessness. It was to dispel the frightful clouds of melancholy that darkened his existence that she wrote the "Heptameron," a book which has given her a place among the immortals. Stories had always amused François, and Marguerite had always possessed a singular talent for telling them. Now she gathered all her best stories into a volume for his benefit. They fulfilled their purpose, for he liked to hear the stories read.

The darkest of all his tragedies was to overshadow the King's closing years.

Boulogne had been captured by the English. François, naturally anxious to recover so important a place, sent his sons, the Dauphin and Charles, to besiege it, and went himself to the Abbey of Faremoutiers, near Abbeville, to await events.

The plague raged outside Boulogne. Hundreds of soldiers were dying daily, and the dreadful illness, unchecked by any attempt at sanitary measures, was spreading through the country. The village of Faremoutiers was within the infected area. There happened to be no room in the Abbey for the duc d'Orléans, and it was necessary to lodge him and his followers in a house in the village. Charles was not pleased

with the quarters assigned to him. He felt sure there must be larger rooms in the house than those placed at his disposal, and making a further inspection, discovered a fine suite of apartments, apparently unoccupied. The young man announced his intention of taking possession of these, when his host intervened, begging him not to go near the rooms, as several persons had died there of the plague. Charles broke into one of his madcap fits of high spirits and irresponsible folly. "Never a son of France has died of the plague!" he cried, and to show how little he feared, he called to his companions, and drawing his sword, ran it through the mattress of a bed. The others tossed the pillows on their swords from one to the other. The feathers flew thickly in all directions, covering the laughing group.

Charles slept in this room that night. He woke after two hours' sleep and called for help. "I am ill; it is the plague, and I shall die." He lived for three days. At last his father insisted on braving the contagion and going to the dying bed of his favourite child. "Ah, Sire, I am dying! But now that I see you again, I die content." The King was carried from the room in a fainting condition as soon as Charles breathed his last. He was twenty-three, the best-beloved, the handsomest, most reckless, most princely of the Valois children. The stricken King never recovered the blow. He survived his son only a few months.

In the convent at Tusson the Queen of Navarre was spending the season of Lent in retreat. One night, early in April, she dreamed that the King stood at her bedside and cried twice, "My sister, my sister!" So vivid was the dream, that in an agony of anxiety

she sent messengers to bring back news of the King. He had been dead a fortnight before anyone dared to tell her. The vision had again appeared to her, and she learned the truth at last from a poor crazy nun.

Marguerite outlived her brother for two years, dying at the Château d'O-det, 21 December, 1549. Her body lies in the cathedral at Lescar.

Perhaps she guessed how she would shine in time to come as a woman who played a part in great affairs, who in a hard age was devoted to freedom, tolerance, and compassion. But she did not know how beautiful and rare a light her memory would yield through all time, how unequalled in all the pages of history would be the record of her undying love and faith.

CHAPTER IV

CHILDREN OF HENRI II AND CATHERINE DE' MEDICI

THE children of François I, delicate, elusive little shadows, flitting here and there across the stage of history, are seen now in the light of ancient heroic days, now in the clearer flame of the great awakening. But the pure light of the Renaissance had begun to flicker unsteadily when another generation of Valois boys and girls came upon the scene.

The children of Henri II and Catherine de' Medici were born to a different inheritance. Their little figures, so much more clearly outlined in a time of richer historical material, give a definite and detailed impression, but it is no longer possible to feel the warm, clear airs of old France blowing through the records of their days. The ancient chivalric grace, the sunlit glimpses, half-tender tradition and half-dream, are alike gone. Something much more sharply defined has come instead, something more stern, more sombre, more momentous. The playtime of the world is over.

The children were born under the shadow of a commanding personality, from which they were fated never wholly to emerge.

History has written across the record of Catherine de' Medici a mark of infamy which will never be effaced.

She will always remain a dark, clear-cut figure thrown against the stormy background of her day.

It should in justice be remembered that she had a great deal to bear, and bore it stoically. A woman of huge ambitions, subjected through all the best years of her life to a bitter burden of humiliation, without guiding principles, without religion, was not likely, when the power was at last within reach, to use it for any but pitiless ends.

It was the private tragedy of Catherine's life that she loved her husband Henri and was never loved in return.

"I loved him so much that I was always afraid of him," she wrote once. Only during the first three years of their marriage could there have been any hope of capturing his affections, for at the end of that time the wife of seventeen saw herself definitely supplanted. The cold sense of disappointment spoilt even the earliest years. No child came to help Catherine to gain Henri's favour. There was a galling sense, too, that whether she had a child or not mattered little to anyone, for France looked to the still unmated Dauphin François as the hope of the nation. From the Dauphin would surely descend new sons of the kingly race of Valois.

The year 1536 was full of momentous events for Catherine. In August, as we have seen, the young Dauphin died, still unwed. In a moment Catherine leapt into the position of importance so dear to her soul. She was no longer Duchesse d'Orléans, but Dauphine of France. Perhaps she hoped, even now, in the flush of new interests and ambitions, again to lay siege to the cold heart of Henri, to claim her just part in the new life opening before them. This hope

was definitely cut off. The same year that saw the death of the Dauphin François saw the advent of Diane de Poitiers.

History has credited Diane with the strange haunting beauty that belongs to the women of the Renaissance. With an exquisite pallor, a grave and remote expression, sedate and dignified, clad in unvarying black and white that marked her widowhood, she never made any attempt to compete with the fresh attractions of younger women. She relied rather on some matchless quality which the years could not touch. The new moon was her emblem, clear, cold, remote, yet radiating a mysterious enchantment. Catherine witnessed her husband's complete absorption into the life of this fascinating rival. Diane was thirty-seven and Henri barely seventeen. Surely, thought Catherine, it was an infatuation that could not last, the brief flame of an ignorant youth for the cultivated woman of the world. Catherine was seventeen herself, and thirty-seven seemed a great age. In her eyes Diane was not even beautiful. It was incredible, impossible, that the siren should hold her victim more than a month, a year, a little period of blind adoration.

But the incredible and the impossible happened. The star of Diane grew brighter with the passing of time, and remained in the ascendant for twenty-two years. The death of Henri alone extinguished it.

All the time the sorrow of Catherine's soul was growing. The years were passing, and still no royal children came. And now France took heed of her vexation and shared her disappointment. All the splendours of her future position would be lost if she gave no heirs to the throne. Moreover, there were

murmurs throughout the country that if the Florentine had no child, the marriage should be annulled. These rumours reached the unhappy Catherine. The moment had come when François must help her. She threw herself at his feet and won his promise that the marriage should stand. The relief was but momentary, and life soon resumed its dreary outlook. François could save her now, but the time was coming when he would not be there, when her husband Henri would be King, and at the word of Diane he would perhaps repudiate his childless Queen.

Then suddenly her whole world changed. The drear skies lifted, and the flood of Catherine's ambition was loosed again. After ten years of marriage there came the promise of a child.

On 20 January, 1544, the little François was born at Fontainebleau, the eldest of ten royal children.[1]

The baptism of the baby in the Chapelle de la

[1] The children of Henri II were as follows :—

(1) François II, born 19 January, 1544 ; married Mary, Queen of Scots, 24 April, 1558 ; died 5 December, 1560.

(2) Elisabeth, born 2 April, 1545 ; married Philip II of Spain, 20 June, 1559 ; died 3 October, 1568.

(3) Claude, born 12 November, 1546 ; married 5 February, 1559, Charles II, duc de Lorraine ; died 20 February, 1575.

(4) Louis, born 3 February, 1548 ; died 24 October, 1550.

(5) Charles Maximilien (Charles IX), born 27 June, 1550 ; married 26 November, 1570, Elisabeth of Austria ; died 30 May, 1574.

(6) Edouard Alexandre (Henri III), born 19 September, 1551 ; married 15 February, 1575, Louise de Lorraine ; died 2 August, 1589.

(7) Marguerite, born 14 May, 1552 ; married 18 August, 1572, to Henri, King of Navarre ; died 17 March, 1615.

(8) Hercule (François, duc d'Alençon), born 18 March, 1554 ; died 10 June 1584.

(9) Victoire, born 24 June, 1556 ; died 17 August, 1556.

(10) Jeanne, twin with Victoire ; died soon after birth.

Sainte Trinité, at Fontainebleau, was a magnificent ceremonial. Three hundred torches were carried by the King's body-guard and other guards who lined the way from the palace to the church. The King and Queen, with an immense gathering of princes, courtiers, ambassadors, and cardinals, followed the procession, a glittering crowd in splendid raiment. The chapel was hung with fine tapestry. Under a canopy of cloth of silver erected in the middle of the chapel, the Cardinal de Bourbon performed the baptismal rites. The ceremony was followed by a series of splendid fêtes which lasted several days.

The moment must have held its exquisite compensations for the baby's mother. The royal family gathered at Fontainebleau bent with reverence over the cradle. To the King, not old in years, but stricken in spirit, worn out mentally and physically, she could give the last pleasure of his days, and place in his arms his first grandson. It was a poor, puling little atom of humanity, a miserably unhealthy infant, but it was the hope of the nation, an heir to the dynasty. Catherine felt herself the centre of her world for once. The King, the Queen, Marguerite of Navarre, Charles d'Orléans, the heir presumptive, the Dauphin, and Diane were all thrown into shadow for the moment, while she stood clearly in the sunlight, holding the baby son. The cravings of her hungry soul might now have found satisfaction, for she had won the common destiny of her womanhood, but to such a nature as hers children were but a means to an end. The little ones followed fast one upon another. As they emerged from babyhood there was another humiliating discovery for Catherine. Diane de Poitiers was to be the controlling spirit in the royal nurseries. Diane loved

children and had a real talent, sufficiently rare in those days, for providing for their health and their education. Catherine had her ideas too, but these could only be carried out if they fell in with the projects of Diane. Thus Catherine was a mother shorn of her best privileges.

The little François was, from the hour of his birth, the centre of a nation's anxiety. The nursery ceremonial was at once inaugurated. His first nurse was Claude Gobelin; his second was a Scotswoman, Maria Virlone. He had five *femmes de chambre* and a barber of his own. He received the official title of "*Monsieur le Duc*," or duc d'Orléans. On his second birthday his grandfather, King François, gave him the governorship of Languedoc. There must have been some ceremonial over this event. "*Monsieur le Duc, glorieux d'être traité en prince, ne voulu plus être vêtu en fille. Cette preuve de fierté précoce charma son père.*" The little delicate infant was still the only Valois boy. The year 1545 had brought another royal child, but it was a girl, Elisabeth, and the importance of the frail life of François was still paramount. He is engagingly described as of a turbulent disposition, but full of grace. All his vitality, his eager spirits, grew less and less as the years went on, each bringing an increase of weakness and ill-health. It is wonderful how his attendants managed to keep the child alive, in an age when only the strong survived as a rule.

The King died early in 1547, and Catherine was a Queen. The emptiness of her title was known, not only to herself, but to every peasant in France. The crescent moon of Diane sailed higher into the heavens, filling ever-widening horizons with its enchanting

light. The new King Henri II worshipped at her shrine more devoutly than ever. He now created her Duchesse de Valentinois. At royal progresses it was Diane who received the regal honours. Catherine neither protested nor rebelled. She had learned a secret and deadly patience.

François had already two little sisters and a brother when, in the autumn of 1548, his future wife, Mary, Queen of Scots, was sent from her northern kingdom to be brought up at the French Court. In spite of immense differences of disposition, the little boy and girl began at once the touching friendship that was to last till their final separation by death. The two children presented a pathetic contrast. Mary was a beautiful, well-grown child of nearly six, very intelligent and full of charm, developing mentally and physically day by day. François was four and a half, weak, thin, small, and so backward that he could not speak plainly, indeed, his speech was always very indistinct, nor did his intelligence ever fully develop. He was destined to remain always a child. Brantôme says that Mary, at this time, spoke only the *Scottish* language, which he describes as "*fort rurale, barbare, mal sonnante et séante.*" It is certain, however, that Mary had spoken French all her life in Scotland with her French mother, and Brantôme's remark must be accepted with the caution usually necessary in dealing with his statements. He adds that such was her grace of speech that every one found it beautiful.

The brilliant child brought to the Court of France an element of grace and charm, a flow of happy spirits, that captivated all hearts. The sombre Henri adored her. "She is the most perfect child I ever saw," he

said. Diane de Poitiers took a deep interest in her education.

"*La Petite Reinette d'Ecosse*" held in her little soul, newly awakening to the meaning of life, that great secret of winning and keeping love which was to be the one happiness of a very unhappy life. Interest concentrates round her in these early days, for her personality is so much more vivid, her gifts so much more striking than those of her companions, the Valois girls and boys, that she is always seen as the moving spirit in the amusements and occupations of the little Court. Only one other child there could in any degree have matched her in intellect or charm. Fleeting glimpses are caught in the records of the day of yet another girl at Court, four years older than Mary, a gracious, elusive form. She was known as Diane de France, a dignified traditional title to which her birth gave her no claim. But her father, Henri II, had no other children when she was born, and wished to confer on this dearly loved daughter the highest honour possible. The parentage of Diane remains a mystery, which is now unlikely ever to be cleared. She was brought up by Diane de Poitiers, who acted in all things as a mother.

At Court the child was treated with all the honours and distinctions of a daughter of France. Her prerogatives were royal. There were only two coaches in Paris. One of these belonged to the Queen, and the other to Diane de France. She had her part in affairs of State, and was admitted to the counsels not only of her father, but afterwards to those of the Kings, her half-brothers. But it is in the open air and in the excitement of the chase that the clearest visions are revealed of Diane, flying through the sun and shadow

MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS, WIFE OF FRANÇOIS II, AS A GIRL
From a drawing by François Clouet

of many a royal forest, a beautiful girl, full of grace and vitality, and above all a marvellous horsewoman. No one at Court could match her either in her skill in riding or in dances " either grave or gay." She sang well and played the lute. A sunny, gracious nature, a kindly, responsive manner, a large heart and generous soul made every one love her.

Thirty-seven " children of honour " were the playfellows and companions of the Valois boys and girls, whose lives were practically passed in public. It is hard to disentangle any view of their childish figures, except as the centre of a crowd, but among all the restless activities and excitements there were also some simple pleasures. Here and there the picture rises of Mary and the frail Dauphin reading together in the closes of some sunny garden the old glorious stories of knighthood and ancient chivalry, or riding together on the little ponies sent from Scotland, hither and thither about the pleasant fields of the dear France they loved.

The little Dauphin, to whom fate had denied so much, and who was destined never to play the great part to which he was born, had his happy days in the sunshine of the personality of his comrade. In spite of his bodily weakness, the boy, as he grew older, was keenly alive to the joys of sport and to all manly activities. Of all the four sons of Henri II he had the noblest instincts.

The next child to him in age was the little Elisabeth, the only one of her five daughters really loved by Catherine. Claude followed soon after, and these two little sisters were brought up in all things exactly alike, sleeping in the same cradle, driving in the same

coach, receiving the same presents, and wearing the same colours. They had the usual childish ailments, including measles, of which they were cured by means of powder made of a unicorn's horn. It is wonderful that any but the strongest children survived the doctoring of the day.

Elisabeth was the chief playmate of Mary Stuart, whose own four Maries were temporarily removed when she first came to St. Germain, in order that she might be more completely thrown with the Children of France. The two little girls loved and quarrelled like other little girls. It was one of the few sorrows of Mary's girlhood that she had to see Elisabeth go away from the Court to her unknown husband and her Spanish kingdom. They danced a *pavane* together at the wedding and parted for ever.

Little Louis, duc d'Orléans, born in 1548, lived only two years. The birth of a second son of France caused immense rejoicings; he seemed much stronger and more normal than his brother the Dauphin. The astrologers, whom Catherine always diligently consulted, predicted a mighty career. Happiest among all the Valois sons, he was destined to know none of their sorrows. At his public baptism, celebrated with extraordinary splendour, the infant was sacrificed to a rigorous Court etiquette which ordained that he should be handed about from one Court functionary to another, presumably insufficiently clad, as he died from cold two days later.

Following the little Louis came Charles, who, at nine years old, was fated to be King of France. A year later Edouard Alexandre was born, who also was to reign as Henri III. Marguerite, Hercule, and the

twin girls completed the group. One baby, the little Jeanne, did not long survive its birth. Catherine herself nearly died. Brantôme mentions the other baby: "*Victoire, cette belle fille, mourut incontinent et ne vint aucunement en maturité.*"

These sons and daughters of Henri II belonged to an age immensely great in art, in letters, and in human progress.

The Court of France was then at the height of its glory, a scene of endless splendour, pageant, and display, with all the activities that belong to a time of national prestige and of great riches. The children led an extraordinary existence, moving constantly from one great palace to another, for this was a necessity of life. When the Court moved an immense train followed, a *cortège* miles long, lumbering over roads that would now hardly be dignified with the name of cart-tracks, bearing furniture and all other requirements. Residence would then be established at the chosen château, as many of the courtiers as possible lodging within the walls, while the rest of the dependents were quartered in the surrounding villages, wherever room could be found, often to the intense indignation of the villagers. Not only were the most primitive ideas of sanitation unknown, but the commonest decencies of life were disregarded, so that a short sojourn in any place rendered it uninhabitable. The food resources of the neighbourhood would also become exhausted, and then a move must be made. Away went the whole *cortège* again to the next château chosen by the King. Sixteen of these changes were made in one year while the Queen of Scots was with the Children of France.

The glittering Court offered everything but the

routine and tranquillity so essential to childhood. It was the scene of a moving transformation from splendour to splendour. Pageant and tourney, mask, review, and ball, in all these the children bore a part. Little time was left for childish pleasures and pursuits. It is good to think of them enjoying the simpler pleasures of hunting and hawking, and the small excitements of masks and tricks organized by themselves, and involving the fascinating ceremony, so dear to all children, of " dressing up."

Interest in animal life, a marked characteristic in the royal families of France, was fostered wherever they went. In every palace a collection of animals was kept. Four large dogs (muzzled) and twenty-two little house dogs were kept at a single château, and there was always a stable full of horses and ponies, besides all the falcons and hounds required for sport. But a menagerie of wild beasts, snakes, wolves, ostriches, boars, and bears was also considered essential, and doubtless provided an endless source of amusement to the boys and girls.

They were entertained also by a constant supply of acrobats, mummers, maskers, travelling actors, the Court fools who contributed in some mysterious way to the gaiety of life, and last but not least, the masters who taught dancing, shooting, jousting, and all chivalrous accomplishments.

In the midst of it all a high standard of education was maintained, if that of Mary Stuart is to be accepted as an example. Long before she was grown up she spoke four languages, wrote in Latin, played on three instruments, and could embroider, knit, and cook. Possibly her tutors took advantage of her great natural abilities to exhibit her as a small prodigy,

and her less gifted companions, the Children of France, escaped more easily.

An old gentleman named Montpipeau was appointed governor of the Dauphin's younger brothers. He had but one function, to inculcate absolute obedience to their elder brother, the future King. A multitude of masters were engaged to teach a large variety of subjects. Minute care was exercised by Catherine de' Medici and Diane de Poitiers in all that concerned education, but there seems to have been nothing done to train character, to develop self-control, or any sense of justice and honour. Historical record remains of the routine of the boys' day. They rose very early, and read either in the Scriptures, or the work of some religious author. The tutor then on duty added comments. Then came repetition of lessons learned the day before, then a walk or a game of tennis. Dinner was at ten in the morning. After dinner came another walk, followed by a music lesson, and then three hours of work at some special study. The riding lesson came next, in which the boys learned jumping and all the feats of horsemanship then in vogue. Gymnastics were also practised. Supper was the chief meal of the day. In the evening the children played at cards, enigmas, lotteries, and chess. The last thing before they went to bed the tutor repeated the lessons of the day. This routine must have been very constantly interrupted, for the record does not make mention of the hours spent in attending Mass, or in hunting, hawking, or travelling, and leaves no margin for the countless distractions already mentioned.

As to the children's dress, it resembled exactly in miniature that of grown-up people. It had not yet

occurred to anyone that children might be happier and healthier in simpler, lighter clothing. Pictures of the little princesses exhibit them like dolls in long, stiff skirts and tight bodices, with wide sleeves richly adorned with pearls or precious stones, and trimmed heavily with ribbons; their cloaks were lined with ermine. The hair was always drawn away from the face as much as possible. The boys wore the same short coat as the men of the day, and full *pantalons* made of plaited material and striped with loose bands of a different colour. The under-vest had large puffed sleeves, adorned with coloured bands of material. The Italian toque of velvet, ornamented with a jewel, and a feather on one side, was tilted over the ear.

Political events of the highest importance have naturally thrown into the background the details of the royal nursery, but here and there the little personalities of the children emerge for a moment among the actors in the stern drama, crossing the stage, so crowded with great figures and momentous issues, with a delicate and strangely alien touch of lightness and grace.

Princess Claude was naughty one day. Her offence was not of a desperate nature. Contrary to nursery rules, she had insisted on drinking water before going to bed. Her sister Elisabeth was instructed to reprove this iniquity in her younger sister. This Elisabeth declined to do, on the conscientious ground that she herself had wished to drink water. The affair made a little stir in the nursery, and has its place in history, because it formed the subject of a Latin theme written by Mary, Queen of Scots, the eldest of the group. She assumes a shocked and admonitory attitude.

" We should be examples to the people. How can we reprove others, unless we ourselves are faultless ? "

Another of the stories concerns Henri, when he was ten years old. The struggle between the reformed religion and Rome was violently agitating France, and some of the attendants of Prince Henri had persuaded him to pretend an interest in the Huguenot doctrines. He went about the Court saying, " *Je suis le petit Huguenot moi, mais je le serai grand.*" He decided to convert his sister Marguerite, a year younger than himself. Marguerite sturdily declined to make the required change, or to sing the Psalms according to the version by the Huguenot poet Marot, which her imperious brother desired her to do. With the true spirit of intolerance, the boy seized her book of " Hours," her missal, and her rosary, and threw them into the fire. He remarked that she was stupid and obstinate, and evidently intended to become as great a fool as her governess. The outraged Marguerite wept, but replied with spirit, " Monsieur, you may kill me if such is your pleasure, but I will suffer every ill rather than lose my soul." The story of Henri's undesirable methods of conversion reached Catherine de' Medici, who took away the boy's own books of devotion and scolded him well. His tutors were dismissed for having allowed the thing to happen. At the end of five years, his sister Marguerite re-converted him to the Church of his fathers.

Henri writes a charming little letter, when he was eight, to his brother François, who was then already King. The missive must have reached him nearly at the end of his life.

" Monsieur,—I am very sorry that you are so ill,

and so long. I wish I had something that could give you pleasure, and could be with you to help pass the time. Monsieur, I am always studying, so that when I am big I can do you service. I recommend myself to your good grace. I pray to God that you will soon be well.—Your humble and very obedient brother,

"ALEXANDRE DE FRANCE"

Charles was, as a boy, almost as frail in health as his brother the Dauphin, but he was extremely fond of gymnastics and all physical exercises, and was a great admirer of the acrobats that came frequently to exhibit their accomplishments to the Court. Charles greatly wished to attain to their suppleness and dexterity. Moreover, he was sure he could do it. He began by trying to kiss his own foot. His failure annoyed him. He declared he should succeed, by practice, in rendering his joints like those of an Italian mountebank whose antics he specially admired. No one could persuade the child to the contrary. He made a bet of a thousand *écus* with a captain at Court that in three years he would do it.

Most clearly seen of all the figures in the Valois nursery is that of the little Marguerite, the "Queen Margot" of history, a bright and charming child. There is an amusing account of her, when she was five years old, sitting on her father's knee, and with a serious air rejecting Henri de Lorraine, duc de Guise, as a suitor. She said she would never marry a subject.

"There were in the same room," says Margot in her Memoirs, "playing and diverting themselves, the Prince de Joinville, since the great and unfortunate duc de Guise, and the Marquis of Beaupréau, who died in his fourteenth year, and by whose death his

country lost a youth of most promising talents. Amongst other discourse, the King asked which of the two princes that were before me I liked best. I replied: 'The Marquis.' The King said: 'Why so? he is not the handsomest.' The Prince of Joinville was fair, with light-coloured hair, and the Marquis de Beaupréau brown, with dark hair. I answered: 'Because he is the best behaved; while the Prince is always making mischief, and will be master over everybody.'"

It must have been very soon after this scene that, being affianced to another suitor, she wrote the following letter to her father:—

"My little Papa,—Send me my New Year's presents, and tell my husband that I recommend myself humbly to his good grace, and ask him to send me something pretty, and also some little *popines* and little men and little women. M. D. F."

Henri II died when the imperious Margot was five. She was by far the prettiest and most interesting of his children, and even in infancy was full of the romantic charm that in a measure transfigures the endless immoralities of her later life. Beautiful and kind, she inherited the generous, emotional impulses of the Valois, together with her mother's total lack of moral sense. Margot sails through the history of her day always as an arresting personality, an enchanting combination of imperial pride and small lovable human instincts.

Something of this attraction belonged to all the Valois children in their early youth—a certain nobleness of nature linked to warm, impulsive, and artistic

temperaments. Everything in such characters would depend on the early training.

Their mother, Catherine, was the last woman who should have had the upbringing of children. She lacked entirely any guiding principle. Expediency was her god, and craft the key-note of her character.

The elder girls were early married and withdrawn from personal intercourse. It was upon the characters of the younger boys that the chief flood of her influence was spent. The effect of their mother's dominating will upon their development was seen in the fact that they did not develop at all. What they were as young boys, they remained when they were Kings of France.

Something in the description of the boy Charles makes appeal to the imagination. His beautiful eyes, brown and soft, were set wide apart in a countenance full of sympathy and intellect. His figure was tall but stooping. His young face bore, even in childhood, the wrinkles of ill-health. Wayward and distrait, there was yet a kindness and loyalty in his air, expressing at once the dignity of a prince and the dreams of a poet. All great things in art, poetry, and music were dear to his boyish soul. Ronsard was his chosen poet, and Ronsard cherished some of the verses the boy wrote himself when he was fourteen. As he grew older, all arts appealed to him. He learned a beaten-metal craft. He had his own studio in the Louvre, with a forge, where he made swords and armour, expending his passionate energy in manual work. Above all things, he loved music. "*Dieu! qu'il aimait la musique!*" writes a contemporary. He was carried away, exalted, happy beyond mortal happiness, when he listened to fine music. He chose personally the singers in the choir of his private chapel,

and sang with them. Next to music, like a true Valois, he loved the chase, and especially stag-hunting. Encouraged from childhood to follow all forms of sport, it became so much a passion that the pursuit amounted to a diseased activity. Unlike his brothers and sisters, he was not luxurious in his tastes and habits, was sparing in his diet, drank only water, and cared nothing for splendid surroundings. One bitter truth remains to be told concerning him. He was subject to fits of insanity. Dark, brooding, perverse, shaken with homicidal rage, killing animals in default of human prey, when under the shadow of this horrible affliction, no one would have recognized the refined and lovable boy. In the midst of it all he was capable of deep and lasting affections. He loved his tutor, Jacques Amyot, and his old nurse. But he allowed his writing master to be hanged for heresy without lifting a finger to save him. When the fit was upon him, blood-lust ruled. Horrible things are told of him, how he killed and mutilated pigs, afterwards paying the owners of the unfortunate animals. One day he wished to kill the mule belonging to his friend the Sieur de Laussac. "What quarrel, *Roi très chrétien*, can have happened between you and my mule?" said de Laussac. The sum of a hundred and twenty-five *livres* was paid to Laurent Escorse, a muleteer, for a mule which Charles had taken away to make it fight his lions. No physician in the age to which he belonged understood in the least the proper treatment of the insane, indeed, it does not appear that the poor boy received any treatment at all. His frightful outbursts of rage were a kind of asset in the family. His mother had no scruple, in later days, in making infamous use of the signs and consequences of these attacks to further

her schemes. She knew exactly how to play on the unstrung nerves and to bring to fever-point the madness in his blood. On her alone must rest the blame of the terrible crowning tragedy of the life and reign of Charles—the mad riot of slaughter that has scarred for ever his memory and the annals of France.

Henri, duc d'Anjou, was one year younger than Charles. Brilliant, audacious, manly as a boy, with great military gifts and ambitions, he was the sole object of Catherine's devotion, even when all these shining qualities suffered hopeless eclipse. In appearance Henri was slender like his brothers, and of about middle height, not so tall as Charles or so short as Alençon. He must have been a strange child, and there is little doubt that he was not free from the family taint of madness. It is on record that he was fond of animals, and was allowed to rear wild beasts at the Château de Madrid, in the Bois de Boulogne. He dreamed one night that these beasts had attacked him. A dream was more than enough to upset the unstable balance of his mind. In the morning he gave orders that all the wild beasts were to be killed. He had them replaced by packs of small dogs.

As time went on all his robust ambitions faded from his mind. He became hopelessly effeminate. Covered with perfumes and essences, wearing immense earrings, inordinately fond of diamonds, spending vast sums on fantastic clothes, in appearance as in mind he became grotesque. Even hunting did not attract him. His amusements were of the feeblest. He sought the company of boys as foolish as himself, called them his *mignons*, and led them into a thousand meaningless and unprincely frolics. In his quieter moments he talked to parrots, teased dwarfs, and

HENRI III AS A CHILD
From a drawing in the Bibliothèque Nationale

sought for little dogs to add to his collection. In pursuit of these he would go into private houses and even into convents. The unfortunate owners were obliged to relinquish the dogs with the best grace they could muster.

The youngest son of France, François Hercule, duc d'Alençon,[1] was at one time a promising boy. In person he was short and swarthy, but had a certain fineness of feature till he was nine years old, when his face was utterly disfigured by an attack of smallpox. He became remarkably ugly. As he grew older he was acutely conscious of his unattractive appearance, which very surely would not pass without derisive comment in an age and a Court where sensitive feelings were little considered. His characteristics in boyhood were like those of his father. He was sombre, taciturn, and secret, his natural childish gaiety giving place to a hard and bitter spirit. The marked preference of Catherine for his brother Henri ate into his soul. All the furious quarrels of the three brothers had their origin in this aching jealousy, which she caused and fostered for her own ends.

[1] Alençon is remembered in English history as the French boy with whom the middle-aged Queen Elizabeth coquetted for years in one of her grotesque matrimonial comedies.

CHAPTER V

FRANÇOIS II

THE first great family event in the lives of the Valois children was the marriage, on 24 April, 1558, of the Dauphin to Mary, Queen of Scots. The bridegroom was fourteen years old and the bride fifteen and a half. The wedding was at the Cathedral of Notre-Dame in Paris, and was the occasion of a splendid ceremonial. There had been no royal marriage since that of Magdaleine and the Scottish King, twenty-two years before. The great event drew to Paris an immense crowd of all classes. All the French royalties and many of the Scottish nobility were present. Round the figures of the two children were gathered a concourse of men and women whose names ring down the ages still. The Guise brothers were there, uncles of the bride, alert, tense, absorbed, for their ultimate rise to power seemed assured in this marriage. In another group stood the King of Navarre and his son Henri, who was some day to be King of France, and his brothers the Cardinal de Bourbon and the Prince de Condé, destined to play stupendous parts in the drama soon to be unrolled. Here were the great families of the Montmorencys and Châtillons, and there Diane de Poitiers, Diane de France, Catherine de' Medici, the grave King Henri II, and the little group

of the Dauphin's six brothers and sisters, from Elisabeth, who was thirteen, to the baby Hercule, who was three.

Outside the circle of Crown and Court, thronging the narrow streets, climbing the steep-pitched roofs, gathered a vast multitude of the poor of Paris, attracted by the glitter of so sumptuous a spectacle. There crowds of obscure bourgeois and of wretched peasants could find some pitiful thrill of pleasure, some sense of possession in the sight of the far-off magnificence their misery supported.

To the little Dauphin it was a day of great happiness. Mary had been his playfellow and his protector ever since he could remember, and he had found in her the one soul to whom he could turn for understanding. He must have looked a frail creature beside the tall figure of his bride, who was fast growing into the heritage of her imperial womanhood. "She was dressed in a robe whiter than the lily, but so glorious in its fashion and decorations that it would be difficult, nay, impossible for any pen to do it justice. Her royal mantle and train were of bluish grey cut velvet, embroidered with white silk and pearls. It was of marvellous length, full six toises, covered with precious stones, and was supported by young ladies."

The ceremony was followed by the favourite forms of entertainment then in vogue, a magnificent ball and mask. In all the festivities the Children of France bore conspicuous parts.

The married life of the pair lasted a little more than two years. The health of François steadily declined, and he was obliged to wander, as of old, from one palace to another in search of the healing he never found.

The year following saw three marriages in the

royal family, the first, on 22 January, 1559, being that of the King's second daughter, Claude, then eleven years old. The bridegroom, Charles III of Lorraine, was sixteen. A sumptuous trousseau was provided. Claude is a shadowy figure in the annals of France, but she shines clearly forth on her wedding-day in her quaint attire. She wore a *vasquine* of gilt yellow satin, the bodice and sleeves trimmed with silver embroidery and petticoat to match. Her royal mantle and *cotte dessoux* was of cloth of gold. The little girlish figure must have looked stiff and doll-like in these splendid and unsuitable trappings. Brantôme has left a description of Claude as a beautiful, good, sweet Princess, a true daughter of France, full of intelligence and spirit.

During the sixteen years of her married life she brought her husband three sons and six daughters. She died at Nancy in 1575 at the birth of twin sons.

Her sister Elisabeth was married four months later than Claude. Putting aside all the exaggerations of polite contemporary historians, who describe her as of celestial beauty, there is no doubt that the tall, dark-eyed, dark-haired child had a heritage of grace and charm. From her infancy her matrimonial fate had been the cause of conntless Court intrigues.

In 1547, as a very small child, she was betrothed to Don Carlos, who was then two years old, the son of the Spanish King Philip II,[1] whose second wife was Bloody Mary, Queen of England.

[1] Philip II was four times married. First to Maria of Portugal, mother of Don Carlos. She died 1545. Second, in 1554, to Mary of England, who died 1558. Third, in 1560, to Elisabeth of France, who died 1568, leaving two daughters. Fourth, in 1570, to his niece, Anne of Austria, who died 1580. She was the mother of Philip III of Spain.

The death of Mary again made Philip of Spain an eligible bridegroom. He decided to marry Elisabeth of France himself, in place of his son. The Spanish King was thirty-two, which would mean, to the inexperience of her fourteen years, a great disparity. The personality of Philip, grim, unsmiling, bigoted, not to be shaken from his attitude of fierce intolerance, had for long cast a powerful and threatening shadow over the councils of Europe. The prospect of leaving the liberty, the thousand interests of home, all the troop of girls and gallants who had filled her life with gaiety and laughter, for such companionship may well have given her moments of misgiving. To lose the laughter was the worst, and Philip never laughed.

It was to be a double wedding, for the King had also arranged the marriage of his sister Marguerite, the last remaining daughter of François I. She was to be married to the duc de Savoie. The bride was thirty-seven, an age which would in those days have definitely relegated her to the grey circle of middle life, for a woman rarely remained unmarried after her teens, unless she adopted a religious life. Doubtless she might, as the King's sister, have retained an obscure niche at Court, exhibiting the rare figure of a sixteenth-century maiden aunt, but in the general stir of affairs at the peace of Château Cambresis, she became a pawn in the political game, and equally with her young niece must help to build the fortunes of France. Henri wished to see both princesses married within a few days of each other. The most splendid pageantries were arranged.

The popular pleasure and excitement was, however, soon to be changed to a tragic sense of loss and fear.

The Spanish marriage was celebrated at Notre-Dame on 26 June. The French King, who loved shows of all kinds, had taken an immense interest in impressing the Spanish visitors with the splendours of his Court. He planned one last grand function before Elisabeth set forth to her new husband's kingdom. It was to take the form of a tournament. The lists were set on the usual place for such contests, outside the prison of the Bastille. Thither rode the King and Queen with a glittering suite. These tournaments were generally harmless amusements with more sound and fury than real fighting. The King on this occasion himself entered the lists, and many lances were harmlessly broken. Loud applause from a delighted populace greeted his repeated appearance in the lists. The affair was safely over, and the royal party about to quit the scene, when Henri, still in the flush of victory, espied two lances that still remained unbroken. Taking one himself, he sent the other to Montgomery, the Captain of his Scottish Guard, a young man noted for his skill in jousting, inviting him to break with him, in honour of the ladies, one last lance. Twice Montgomery, struck with some presentiment of disaster, refused the challenge. The Queen sent a message to the King begging him not to fight again. But Henri, in high spirits, and not inclined to brook opposition to his will, would listen to nothing, and sent a definite order to Montgomery to put himself on the defensive. At the violence of the first onslaught the King reeled in his saddle, and both lances were broken. The visor of the King's helmet was accidentally raised by the shock, and a splinter from a broken lance penetrated his face a little below the left eye. He was carried back

unconscious to the palace. The wound was not at first thought to be severe, but the brain was injured, and though he lived ten days there was never hope of recovery. At his express wish the marriage of his sister Marguerite to the duc de Savoie went forward. Without royal pomp she was married at midnight in the private chapel of the Tournelles, close to the dying King.

Henri II died thus on 10 July, 1559.

The ancient ceremonial of France, which enacted that a widowed queen should remain forty days in bed in a darkened room, seeing neither the sun nor the moon, was disregarded by Catherine de' Medici. She could not afford the delay. With the Guises and the new Queen, Mary Stuart, she carried off the little King to the dreary precincts of the Louvre.

Ultimately she made a retreat to St. Germain, in obedience to the prescribed etiquette of mourning, and remained there for five weeks.

The children were gathered round her, the new little King only sixteen years old, the youngest child, Margot, only five. Among the group stood Mary, Queen of Scots, now Queen of France as well—an influence to be considered, and Catherine had never won her friendship.

But behind Mary waited her uncles, the Guise brothers, and there, as Catherine knew, lay the supreme danger at this critical moment.

Outside the circle was the widowed disconsolate figure of Diane de Poitiers, she who was twenty years older than her King, and had never thought to outlive him. Catherine could not feel true compassion, but something in the desolation of that figure must have appealed to her easy pity. She might

have taken keener vengeance on the woman who had ruined her married life. Diane withdrew to her own exquisite domain of Anet.

Forty days after her father's death Elisabeth, the little Queen of Spain, with bitter tears left the Court for ever, and set out on her journey towards her new kingdom and the grim husband she had never seen. Drear misgivings must have beset her childish heart as she crossed the snows of the Pyrénées. Her welcome to Spain was not calculated to cheer her spirits. Cardinal Mendoza received her at the frontier, and in a harsh voice addressed her in the words of the 45th Psalm: "Hear, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear: forget also thine own people and thy father's house. So shall the King desire thy beauty; for He is thy Lord God, and worship thou Him."

The Bishop of Burgos added, "and the King." Philip, her bridegroom, haughty, frigid, and the most powerful sovereign in Europe, met her at Guadalajara. The child gazed so fixedly at him that his first words were spoken in impatience. He asked her whether she was anxious to see if he had white hair.

Looking at the alarmed face of this pretty and charming child, with her dazzling complexion, her dark eyes and hair, her air of distinction and of intelligence, he probably felt irritably conscious that his grim record of double widowerhood unfitted him for the position of husband. The marriage was at Toledo. At the wedding ceremony she fainted. Popular gossip, repeated by various historians, attributes the fact to the bitterness of her feelings on account of Don Carlos, who was once her betrothed. There was no truth in this rumour, and the fainting-fit is

rationally explained by the development, three days later, of an attack of smallpox. Elisabeth had a fortunate escape in the failure of her marriage negotiations with the insane Don Carlos, who now became her stepson.

While the eldest daughter of France lived out the few short years of her reign in Spain, her own country was the scene of bitter desolation. Her marriage had for the time averted war with Spain, but a far worse struggle was soon to begin, in those so-called wars of religion that were to drain France of her best blood and bring her people into acute misery.

Vigorous persecution began with the new reign. The Guises were determined on this course, and the Queen Mother could not stop it.

A Huguenot plot to capture the young King, to remove him from the influence of the Guises, and to make the royal authority an independent power in the kingdom brought matters to a crisis.

The leading spirit in this attempt was Jean de Bari, Sieur de la Rénaudie, but he was supported by all the great Huguenot families.

The simple plan of La Rénaudie was to seize the person of the little King, to get rid of the Guises, and to convoke the Parliament or States-General. If the King refused to conform to the reformed faith he was to be deposed and another King to be chosen. A military rising all over France was organized.

In February, 1560, the Court and the royal family moved from castle to castle on a prolonged hunting excursion. While at the Castle of Blois the Court was suddenly surprised by the *conjuration de la Rénaudie*. Had the plot succeeded the little King

would only have fallen into the hands of loyal friends, but to the Guises it was a moment of sharp peril. At Blois it was not easy to make defence, and the whole party, François and Mary, with Catherine, the three little boys, and Margot, were taken at once to the Castle of Amboise, which commanded a little town easily defended.

The King was assured that the Huguenots meant to kill him. The boy wept, and for the first time uttered reproaches to his masters, the Guises. " What have I done to my people," he cried, " that they attempt my life ? I want to hear their complaints and to do right. It is you alone," he said to the Cardinal, " who make me appear odious to my people. I wish you would go away from here, so that we might see whether it is you or I that they are against."

Mary, the Queen, stood by, pale and silent, watching the unusual sight of anger and fear in her boy-husband. But his protests were unavailing. Neither Duke nor Cardinal had the slightest intention of relaxing their grasp on State affairs.

Guise caused the King to issue an edict according a general amnesty to the rebels, on condition that arms were laid down. Many of the unfortunate Huguenots, however, were flying for their lives or rallying for another attack, and heard nothing of this peaceful message. Some of these even dared to come and attack the Castle. They were repulsed, and their retreat was the signal for a series of horrible and barbarous executions. The amnesty was revoked, the prisoners were hung or drowned in the river Loire. Twelve hundred were put to death in Amboise, where the streets ran with blood and the bodies hung in rows from the battle-

ments of the Castle. Any rebels caught in the forest were simply hung on the nearest trees. Some of the more distinguished prisoners were kept, to try if torture could draw from them the names of other conspirators.

The dark story is told here because it throws a lurid light on the poor Children of France, caught in the meshes of this horrible event, and shows how little consideration for the young nerves and spirits was shown by those who controlled their lives. When the chiefs of the rising were to be executed the two Queens, Catherine and Mary, magnificently dressed and followed by their ladies of honour, came out on the balcony of the Castle to witness the spectacle. " The ringleaders," says an old chronicler, " were not hung till after the King had dined, to give amusement to the ladies, who gather to the windows as if to view a play, as if without pity." It is impossible to think for a moment that the young girl, Mary, tender-hearted, easily moved, and compassionate all her life, went willingly to such a sight. The duty was sternly imposed upon her and the young King by the relentless Guises. Catherine must alone bear the blame of causing her three little boys, the eldest ten years old and the youngest six, to be present.

These scenes at Amboise were almost the last events of the life of François II at which any clear sight of him is to be had. Here and there his boyish figure shows at councils and State meetings during the closing months of his life.

To his mother, to his wife, to the Guise brothers, to all the nation, it was now fully apparent that the death of the young King could not be long delayed. Catherine, who had never loved the sickly, undeveloped

boy at whose birth she had so passionately rejoiced, saw her own hour of supremacy surely drawing near. To the heart of Mary, already grave with the burden of all she had witnessed during the few sad months of the boy's reign, the sorrow of his passing was more than that of a very young wife for a still younger husband. It went farther into the roots of life, for they shared their earliest remembrances like brother and sister, and had belonged utterly to one another. Hers had been the protective love of a strong child for a weaker child ; she was his comrade, his consoler, his champion. To her his best thoughts and hopes had turned ever since he could remember. The tie was not broken without acute suffering.

Worn and exhausted by slow and constant fever, François increased rapidly in height during his last months, thus outgrowing any poor reserve of strength he may once have had. With the wayward impulse of hopeless weakness, he refused to take even reasonable care of his health. The last weeks of his life recall strangely those of his grandfather, François I. There was the same mad impulse to hunt, to be for long hours in the saddle in spite of fatigue, to press forward at a gallop as if thus to satisfy or outstrip the racing pulses of the body. Deep in the forests the boy rode, day after day, heedless of entreaty, in the pursuit of he knew not what, seeking some respite for an oppressed and troubled mind, unable to bear for an hour the torment of inaction.

The final illness of François II began on 16 November, 1560. He spent the morning in the Church of St. Aignan at Orléans, the centre of an immense crowd, consisting largely of diseased persons, for he was there to perform the fatiguing ceremony of " touching for

FRANÇOIS II
From a drawing in the Bibliothèque Nationale

the King's Evil." [1] The atmosphere was exhausted and his strength nearly at an end.

In the midst of his duty to the anxious groups of his sick people, the King fainted. He was carried to the Castle and put to bed, from which he did not rise.

As the King's death drew nearer, the anxieties of the Guise brothers increased in intensity. Fearful lest the boy, now rapidly sinking, should in his extremity say something which would make an excuse for the Bourbons to lay claim to a large share in the government, the duc de Guise and his brother the Cardinal remained resolutely at his bedside. The shadow of their power was never to be lifted. If at any time in his unquiet life the boy had dreamed of a real kingship, of independent action, of honour towards his people, the dream must have quite faded now when he saw the faces that surrounded him at the last. These were they who had made freedom only a dream, and these had triumphed. Now nothing mattered any more. He looked beyond to another figure, beautiful and best beloved, who alone had made life worth living. He knew that Mary had also borne the yoke, that her thoughts were prisoners too, and they two seemed alone in all the hard world as, stricken to the soul, she bent to console his dying bed.

The end came on 5 December. The Cardinal was still there. The last prayer of the dying boy was actually dictated by him. " Lord, pardon my sins, and impute not to me, Thy servant, the sin committed by my Ministers under my name and authority."

To the Guises the influence of Mary over the dead King had meant easy victory in every crisis. Through

[1] The King laid his hand upon the forehead of each sufferer, saying, " The King has touched ; God will heal."

her they had dominated the councils of the realm. Now she had become of no practical account, and they stood alone, their eyes fixed on the Queen-Mother. What would she do? To which party would she turn?

Catherine de' Medici's hour had come at last.

Her dead son did not receive at her hands the usual splendid funeral ceremonials of the Kings of France. No royal honours were paid, no processions arranged. Money was necessary for all her schemes, and the exchequer was nearly empty. Only three mourners followed the body from Orléans to its final resting-place at St. Denis, his old tutors, Saulac and La Brosse, and the Bishop of Senlis, who was blind.

The widowed Mary, withdrawing to her dule-chamber, hung with black, must in the forty dreary inactive days she spent there, a white-robed appealing figure among the mourning draperies, have had time to realize bitterly that with the death of her boy-husband had passed all the careless enchantment of her youth, all the promised glories and dazzling ambitions she had held as Queen of France. Her thoughts would turn from the present grief to a strange future that called her beyond the seas, a future that was to hold for her so many passionate joys, so many sorrows, so tragic an end. In a little while she must pass away to her own grey kingdom.

"Adieu, France, c'en est fait. Adieu, France, je pense ne vous revoir jamais plus."

CHAPTER VI

THE LAST OF THE VALOIS

"GOD first deprived me of your father, and not content with that, He has now deprived me of your brother, whom I loved you know not how much; and He has left me with three little children and a kingdom torn asunder, without a single soul I can turn to who is not possessed by party passion."

So wrote Catherine de' Medici to her daughter, Elisabeth of Spain. The woman who penned these lines, so full of human feeling, had, in reality, just won the position for which she had longed and schemed for years. The reins were in her hands at last. For little Charles IX, the new King, was only ten years old, a dreamy, poetic boy, not likely to develop into a man of affairs. Charles was on the throne for fourteen years, and Catherine reigned all the time. She never won the formal title of Regent from any State authority, but she did not trouble much about titles. She had grasped real power and could afford to let the shadows go.

From the day of the death of François II she knew that she must seem to choose between the Catholic faith, represented by the Guise family, and the Reformed faith, represented by the Bourbons. She managed to give the impression of doing this without

making any definite choice. She was anxious to have the best men on both sides in her counsels.

Catherine, however, had one outstanding weakness. All her life she was subject to panic fears. She feared the power of Spain and Philip II more than anything on earth. She feared war. She was cravenly superstitious, never taking any step without consulting astrologers and necromancers, and she often abode by their decisions or warnings from sheer cowardice. She feared the Guises at this moment so acutely that she could not be persuaded to any resolute action. She would not wholly trust herself and her son to any power.

The little King was being educated in the new opinions. Reform was again the fashion among the great. *Prêches*, those Huguenot services which had once been so strictly forbidden, were openly held, and the Lutheran psalms of Clément Marot were again sung in Court and camp.

In the royal nurseries the Children of France were divided in their precocious religious views. *Prêches* were held even in the apartments of the King, who, however, never forsook the Catholic faith. His brother Henri, as we have seen, was Huguenot in his sympathies to the point of persecuting his little sister Margot, who did not share his opinions. François, duc d'Alençon, was six, and history has not recorded his religious convictions at that time.

There is one story about Henri and the Guises which brings the boy to the foreground of the picture.

The Duke, the Cardinal, and the duc de Nemours, furious at the Huguenot training of the royal nursery, plotted to kidnap Henri, who would have proved a valuable pawn in the game. It was at Fontainebleau.

He was playing with the duc de Guise's own son, the young Prince de Joinville, when he was called from his play and asked if he were Papist or Huguenot. "I am of my mother's religion," said the child, with an infantile craft not surprising in his mother's son. Nemours asked the boy if he would like to go away with him to Lorraine, but he replied that he would stay with the King, his brother. The Guise boy now joined in the talk, having been well coached in his part, and pointed out to Henri the joys of travel and the beauties and pleasures which he would find in Lorraine. Henri, more and more interested, asked how they would go. He was told that he would get out of a window at night and drive off in a coach. This appealed to his adventurous spirit. It all sounded delightfully strange and exciting. The little Prince very naturally carried the whole story to his mother, and the plot was exposed.

Feeling in the country now ran so high that it was no longer possible to avert civil war. The spark that set the whole realm in a blaze was a massacre at Vassy. In 1562 the duc de Guise was passing through the little town on his way to attend Mass. Singing was heard in a barn, where about seven hundred Protestants were holding a service. Guise resolved to stop it. His soldiers attacked the unarmed worshippers, and sixty were killed, including women and children.

Catherine, receiving the news of this fearful affair, was for once surprised into decided action. She forbade Guise the Court. He took no notice of her wrath, but entered Paris like a king, where he was received with all the honours of a conqueror. Protestant reprisals followed. Under Condé the whole Huguenot party broke into rebellion.

At the outbreak of the war the royal children were separated. Catherine kept with her the King and her favourite child Henri, and sent Marguerite and the little duc d'Alençon to Amboise, where they could continue their education in peace under tutors and governesses. The days were happy enough for the children, who loved each other very much. The early marriages of her sisters had thrown Marguerite on the sole companionship of her brothers from her babyhood. "To speak now of the beauty of this rare Princess: I believe that all those who are, will be, or ever have been, are plain beside it and cannot have beauty; for the fire of hers so burns the wings of others that they dare not hover or even appear round it." So writes the flatterer Brantôme, but allowing for his exaggerations, there remains the certainty, borne out by the voices of all her contemporaries, that Margot was beautiful. In complexion she was dazzlingly fair; her hair was black[1] and her eyes blue. She had a majestic carriage and a love for superb dress. There is a word-picture of her in a "gown of shimmering white satin, a trifle of rose-colour mingling in it, with a veil of lace *crêpe* or Roman gauze thrown carelessly round her head, making goddesses . . . look like chambermaids beside her." Another dress was of "rose-coloured Spanish velvet covered with spangles, and with a cape of the same velvet, with plumes and jewels of such splendour as never was."

Margot inherited a great deal of her character from

[1] Fair hair was more fashionable, and Margot in later life adopted a golden wig, though Brantôme says he saw her often wearing her own black hair. As an old lady, Margot went to much trouble and expense to keep herself in fair wigs. She kept several "tall, fair-haired footmen, who were shaved from time to time."

her grandfather, François I; she had his intellectual tastes, his generous love of art, his gifts of geniality and charm. Later events were to show that she inherited also the definite lightness of his morals. The women of her race had all been pure in life till Margot's career proved that it was possible for Valois daughters to draw characteristics as much from their fathers as their mothers.

The passion of her life began in early girlhood. She ought to have been allowed to marry the young Henri, duc de Guise. Her devotion is easily understood, for he was a prince of romance, an irresistible personality that captured the popular imagination. She saw in him the idol of Catholic France, the splendid courageous soldier who knew how to play the lover too. In his person were united a fine physique and the delicate attractive beauty of feature inherited from his Italian ancestors. Moreover, the boy and girl had been intimately thrown together all their lives. A happy marriage was the one chance for a nature such as hers. But political difficulties came in the way, and Margot was doomed, as the wife of her cousin, Henri of Navarre, to endure the yoke of a very different and very unhappy marriage.

Margot was eleven when her mother decided on taking the children a long journey through the realm of France.

Political reasons for the journey would not trouble the children. The plan meant simply excitement and pleasure, a delightful holiday to boys and girl, who in the war-time could not have moved as usual from château to château.

The Court left Paris, 14 January, 1564, a travelling party of eight hundred souls. Besides this number,

each of the great nobles who joined the *cortège* on the way brought his own army of followers. The amount of luggage, containing furniture and wardrobes, carried over the very bad roads may be imagined. Progress was extremely slow. The way was through Champagne and Lorraine to Bar-le-Duc, where fêtes were held to celebrate the baptism of Claude de Valois' baby son. The winter was spent at Lyons. In spring the whole cavalcade made for Bayonne, where they were to meet the Queen of Spain. Margot in her Memoirs describes the splendid entertainments offered them at every stage in their journey.

Nothing in the personal history of the Valois children is so moving as the story of this reunion at Bayonne. Catherine and the children had not met Elisabeth since her marriage, five years before. The moment held real joy for Catherine. Again for a moment her impressive personality shows in the pages of history as simply a woman and a mother, with all a mother's instincts. She had always loved Elisabeth. Now, after five years of separation, she saw how the child had assumed her heritage of gracious womanhood, how the petted, childish Princess, the little "Lady of the Peace," had learned the dignity, the gravity, and the sweetness of a Queen. "Taller than her sisters," says Brantôme, "her bearing had a grace compacted of the mingled grace of France and Spain." Married for five years to Philip II, the most bigoted Catholic in Europe, and a fanatical foe to heresy, it is no matter of surprise that she was utterly out of sympathy with the ideas of the Reformed religion. Her mother found her rigid on the point. "My dear daughter, you have become very Spanish." "I am Spanish, I own it, and in truth it is my duty to be so. But I am

always your daughter—the same that you sent to Spain."

Before turning homewards Catherine writes: "My daughter parted from us on the third of this month (August). I went on the same day to sleep at Hiron, that I might still have the joy of seeing her as long as I could." A further glimpse is given in a Spanish letter. "The adieux of the Queen of Spain to the Queen-Mother and the King were more heart-rending than words can say. There were floods of tears. The Constable came into the King's room and told him he must not cry, because the foreigners, as well as his own subjects, might notice it, and a king ought never to cry. The King thanked the Constable, but he could not stop his tears."

No doubt the tears of Elisabeth, in spite of her Spanish training, were no less sad and uncontrolled. Stricken indeed would have been the hearts of all could they have looked a little forward into the future and known that they were never to meet again.

The little Queen turned southward, back to the duty and dullness of her Spanish Court, there to finish the short remaining days of her life, and all the sumptuous, glittering cavalcade of the French King rode away from the frontier towards France.

The Court returned to Paris in the beginning of March, 1566, after a journey lasting nearly two years.

Descriptions written by those who saw and knew her make it possible to look at Catherine as she was in her later middle life, at the height of her power. The slight, elegant figure that had given her distinction in youth was lost. She was stout, and in fact, in old age, grew so fat that she moved with difficulty. She took no pains to avoid this development, for though she

danced and hunted, riding astride with undiminished energy, she habitually indulged an enormous appetite. Her round, full face, olive complexioned, with its receding chin and full lips, retained its smooth freshness. Her ash-coloured hair was always hidden under the black widow's veil. The large, pale, prominent eyes still kept their secret expression. Her one beauty remained untouched by the years, the perfect moulding of the long white hands.

Here and there light falls on domestic events in the family. The death of Elisabeth de Valois, Queen of Spain, in 1568, brought keen sorrow to Catherine and her children. In November, 1570, the young King was married. The chosen Princess was Elisabeth of Austria, daughter of the Emperor Maximilian II, a young girl of sixteen—"rare in humility and all simplicity." Her only child, Isabelle de France, was born a few months after St. Bartholomew's Eve, 27 October, 1572. The gentle Queen Elisabeth never held the first place in her husband's estimation. It was already secured by Marie Touchet, a Huguenot lady whom Charles loved sincerely and constantly to the end of his life.

The Court of the young Charles was as reckless, as sumptuous, as irresponsible as in the days of his father. Charles was unconventional in his tastes and habits, had boundless curiosity to see and to know all sorts and conditions of men, and gathered a strange medley round him. By nature he was kindly and genial, and as a child was straightforward and loved plain dealing. But no soul condemned to daily intercourse with Catherine could keep its candour. She never touched any young life intimately without ruining it. It was she who selected the comte

de Retz as the King's Governor. De Retz taught him to lie, and also to swear so much in his talk that Catherine found the habit very useful, as in the flood of strong language he let slip secrets not meant for her to hear.

The best thing known about Charles is that he loved Admiral Coligny, who showed the impressionable boy the shining possibility of a united France, a country where Catholic and Huguenot might live in peace side by side. He taught him the ideals of tolerance and justice. Catherine, ever watchful, was jealous of his influence. At the same time she had no wish to quarrel with Coligny, for she wanted his help in bringing about the Protestant match for her daughter, Margot, with the young Henri, King of Navarre. At the moment she was throwing her authority into the scale against the Catholic party. She thought the marriage would ensure a lasting peace.

The preparations for the wedding went forward. The approval of Margot herself was not asked. There was one poignant scene of bitter tears and reproaches when she lay stretched in despair upon an oaken chest and no one could comfort her. She had no real power to resist, and so the woman who loved Henri de Guise nerved herself to become the wife of Henri de Navarre.[1] The bridegroom was not lacking in personal charm. He had much of the brilliant wit, sunshine of nature, and large, tolerant outlook on life that also belonged to the mind of Margot. He was a good-looking, rather large-featured young man, dark eyed and dark

[1] Henri de Navarre succeeded to the crown of France, as Henri IV, in 1589, on the extinction of the Valois branch. He was descended in the tenth degree from Louis IX.

haired, not tall, but well-proportioned and full of grace. As husband and wife the pair knew nothing but unhappiness.

The wedding has always been linked with the dreadful event which followed it immediately. "The Red Marriage" is written on the same page of history as the blackest deed that stained the century.

A large family gathering was of course present, besides crowds, gentle and simple, drawn to Paris by the prospect of a series of sumptuous *fêtes*. A crowd of Huguenot followers of the bridegroom poured into the city. Henri de Navarre was pledged neither to hear Mass nor to cross the threshold of the Cathedral of Notre-Dame. The pair were married on 8 August, 1572, outside the great western door. At the last moment poor Margot's heart failed her, and she was unwilling to make the responses. Her brother, the King, laid a hand on her head and gently bent it down, as if in assent.

Margot has described her own dress on the occasion. "I was robed in royal fashion with a crown and a cape of spotted ermine, which covered the front of my bodice, and I shone with the crown jewels and glistened in my wide blue mantle with its four yards of train, which were borne by three princesses."

The dress of her brother, King Charles, cost fifty thousand crowns. Henri of Anjou wore thirty-two large pearls in his hat, each of twelve carats' weight. He and his brother, Alençon, were dressed alike in pale yellow satin covered with embroideries and precious stones.

The wedding was followed by days of banquets, pageants, balls, and masquerades, when Catholic and Huguenot joined in an abandonment of revel. Yet

Marguerite Daulphine De Valois 3e fille De Henry II. née le 14 may 1551. marié
le 19. aoust 1572. à Henry IV
morte le 27. mars 1615.

MARGUERITE DE VALOIS, DAUGHTER OF HENRI II
From a drawing in the Bibliothèque Nationale

the royal family knew that they stood in danger between the two.

The tragedy of St. Bartholomew was not an isolated act, it was an incident in an iniquitous war, called religious, but really political, one of a series of events, more terrible because more successful than any that had gone before. St. Bartholomew's Eve is the supreme horror of the long-drawn struggle, because it happened in Paris, always strongly Catholic, and because it was the King himself who gave the command to kill. The idea of a general massacre did not originate with Catherine or with the Guises. The mass of the people on both sides had for long looked upon such an event as an ultimate solution of the great quarrel, a final move in the game, and both sides had organized and carried out, all through the war, a series of massacres at different points.

In the city of Paris an unsuccessful attempt on the life of Coligny had filled the air with rumours of conspiracy, with fears of some important enterprise. Within the Louvre there was panic fear. A Huguenot rising was expected every hour. Catherine had lost her calm balance of mind, believing every report of conspiracy. A general massacre seemed to her the only way to secure the safety of the throne. But nothing could be done without the King. She alone could bring him to the decisive action—she alone knew how to induce his fits of madness, how to work on the poor unstable mind, and to turn the vacillating passionate thoughts into a channel of insanity. She must use all this horrible wisdom now. The King must be persuaded to it. History tells of one awful interview with his mother and his privy councillors, in which she tormented him into one of his violent

furies by playing on his fears. For long the poor boy held out, but the mind gave way beneath the strain. "Kill them all, kill them all!" he shouted at last. He went out furiously, leaving Catherine, his brother Henri, and his councillors to finish the iniquitous debate. The plans were made. The demented King could now be counted upon to lend his authority to the plot; his homicidal desires increased as he gave them rein. He was assured of being in danger of dethronement and of assassination.

The terrible night came at last. The ceremony of the Queen-Mother's *couches* was over. In her room were gathered Catherine's two daughters, Claude de Lorraine, who knew of the plot, and the newly made bride, Marguerite, Queen of Navarre, entirely ignorant of everything, who has left us a description of the scene.

"I was sitting on a coffer beside my sister of Lorraine, who seemed to me exceedingly sad, when my mother, who was talking to several people, suddenly noticed I was there and told me to go to bed. As I made my curtsey to her, my sister seized my arm and stopping me, burst into tears. '*Mon Dieu*, my sister, do not go!' she said, which terrified me greatly. The Queen perceived this, and calling my sister to her, forbade her to say anything to me. . . . Again my mother roughly commanded me to go to bed. My sister, with another burst of tears, bade me good-night, without daring to say a single word more; and as for me, I found myself lost, transfixed, unable in the least to imagine what it was I had to dread. As soon as I was in my own closet I began to pray that God would take me into His protection and would preserve me—from whom and what I knew not. . . . But I had the tears of my

sister continually in my heart, and I could not sleep for the fears she had raised within me."

The fatal hour had come. The courtiers had attended the *couches* of the King. All was still and silent in the Louvre for the space of two hours.

The day broke. Catherine had summoned her two sons, the King, reluctant now, but held firmly to his purpose, and Henri. Together they went to the wing of the Louvre, from whence they could watch "the opening of the business." The bell of the Church of St. Germain l'Auxerrois opposite the Louvre was to sound the fatal call.

All three conspirators were in a state of panic. They cowered by a window watching events, not in triumph, but in an agony of terror. Henri has himself left a description of this moment.

"As we were considering the consequences of so great an enterprise to which, to say the truth, we had till then hardly given real reflection, of a sudden we heard the report of a pistol, but I could not say from what direction it came, or if any man were injured thereby. All that I know is this—that the mere sound so wounded us all three and entered so deep into our spirits that it did a hurt both to our senses and our reason. We returned to our first counsels and forthwith allowed the enterprise to take its course."

Coligny was the first of thousands to die that day. "Kill, kill! The King commands it!" Every history tells the story of this massacre, when the streets of Paris ran blood, and the Seine was blocked with floating corpses. It is said that the young King showed nothing but joy—the sight of blood had completely maddened him. He fired from the palace windows at the Protestants of the Faubourg St.

Germain, who had come in boats to claim his royal protection. He felt pleasure in seeing the bodies floating in the Seine. " Have I not played my game cleverly ? " he said. " Have I not learnt my lesson well, in the Latin of my forefather Louis XI ? "

The massacre continued for two days. Charles was with difficulty prevailed upon to stop it. Then, when the fit of madness and blood-lust was over, he correctly expressed his own position : " My head knew nothing about it."

But in his sane moments all peace was gone. He was a horribly haunted creature. Sometimes the fits of excitement and blood-mania came back, and, hideously ferocious, he would go into Paris to witness executions. The day his little daughter was born, he insisted on being present at the execution of two of the friends of Coligny. Either mad or sane, he never attempted to repudiate or deny his responsibility in the massacre. Paris was *en fête* from the moment the killing ceased. Solemn processions were organized to various churches, where gorgeous thanksgiving services were held, patronized by the royal family. Catherine emerged triumphant from the ordeal of her great *coup*. She was relieved, easy in her mind, prepared for the praise of the Catholic Church throughout Christendom.

Messengers were proudly sent to tell the news to other sovereigns of Europe. Philip of Spain received the details of the massacre in a new way—he is said to have laughed for the first time in his life. His message to Catherine was of congratulation on having " so successfully educated her son in her own image." In the estimation of all those whose approval Catherine valued, France had won honour and glory.

She cared little for adverse criticism. Her soul was

not capable of remorse. All the punishment fell on the wretched Charles, who never recovered any measure of peace. His whole nature was altered, and from this time he freed himself from his mother's influence. She could do nothing with him any more ; but he had served her purpose.

" I have always said that I had to do with a lunatic, and that I could never make anything of him."

But in the dark wanderings of his diseased mind he cherished a growing hatred of both his brothers, a hatred begun in childhood and fostered by all around him. This hatred might have broken into flame at any moment, and it was a relief to Catherine when Henri, her favourite child, escaped the danger by being elected King of Poland in 1573, and went away somewhat unwillingly to his new kingdom. Catherine well knew, from the state of Charles' health, that Henri would soon come back as King of France.

Charles now hardly noticed anything, but lay in a stupor, only caring to listen to music. A black melancholy took possession of his soul, and the cloud never lifted. His wife, unloved as ever, but pathetically faithful, was with him in these drear hours.

" I remember," writes Brantôme, " that when he lay in bed, and she came to visit him, on a sudden she sat down near him—a little apart, within sight of him, where she stayed, hardly saying a word. But the whole time she gazed so earnestly that you would have said that she clasped him close inside her heart."

The day before his death he was tended by his old Huguenot nurse, whom he always loved.

" Ah, Nourrice," he cried now and again, " what blood and what murders ! Ah, what evil advice was given me ! Oh, my God, forgive me and have mercy

on me! I know not where I am, so bewildered and disturbed doth He make me. What will become of this country and what will become of me, into whose hands God commended it? I am lost, I know it!" The nurse tried to console him. "May the murders and the bloodshed be upon the head of those who compelled you to them, and upon your evil counsellors." But he was beyond comfort and soon beyond suffering too. He asked for Henri of Navarre at the very last.

"I trust in you alone to look after my wife and my daughter. Pray God for me. Farewell! I rejoice that I leave no male child to wear the crown after me." He did not speak again.

The wise doctors of the day put their heads together and decided that Charles had brought about his own death by excessive blowing of the hunting horn.

Henri, King of Poland, was now King of France. He was crowned in February, 1575. Two days afterwards, he married Louise de Vaudemont—a pretty girl of the family of Lorraine. She remained devoted to the King, her husband, as long as he lived, but met with very little affection in return.

Henri III was now twenty-four, and any attributes of the soldier or the man in his nature had disappeared. He was hopelessly inglorious, hopelessly decadent and effeminate. His undignified follies were endless. Now he gave audience to foreign ambassadors with a basketful of puppies suspended from his neck by a broad silk ribbon; now he indulged in devotional freaks, making pilgrimage to churches with dangling rosaries, telling his beads in the street, organizing immense and strange processions; now he gave Court balls, at which he appeared in a woman's low-necked dress, covered with pearls. His favourites aimed at nothing but

encouraging his madness. Against the *mignons*, with their painted faces and frizzled hair, even Catherine was impotent. She still adored Henri, but got nothing from him but contempt. He kept her entirely out of his counsels. Almost for the first time it is possible to feel real pity for Catherine. "Give orders," she entreats, "for some one to tell me how your affairs are going. I do not ask this because I wish to control them, but because, if they go well, my heart will be at ease, and if they go ill, I can help your trouble. . . . For you are my all."

Saddest among all forlorn figures of little unwanted children is that of the one descendant of the Valois Kings. A Child of France still remained at Court, but so sad, so obscure a little personality, that history passes her over with scarcely a word. This child was Isabelle Marie, the little neglected daughter and only child of Charles IX and his wife Elisabeth of Austria. The prospect of the birth of this child in 1572 was looked upon as an event of momentous importance; it was hailed as the salvation of France, as the resurrection of the dying House of Valois. Then came the collapse of all excitement, the destruction of the fairy edifice of a nation's hope. The royal child was not a Dauphin, but a girl. As a girl her coming meant nothing, and worse than nothing, for her maintenance would be a heavy expense to the State. Poor little unconsidered pawn in the great game of Court intrigue, her obscure life was lived out in the shadows.

Isabelle Marie's father died when she was a year and a half old. When she was three her mother, Queen Elisabeth of France, deserted her. She went to Blois to see the child for the last time in August, 1575. In December she went back to her parents in Vienna,

leaving the little girl to the mercies of Catherine de' Medici. No one made any attempt to save her from this fate, or to lighten the sorrowful days of her babyhood. The child was pathetically conscious of the neglect and unkindness that overshadowed her life. In small and isolated apartments in the dark palace of the Louvre—a most unhealthy spot—or at Amboise, her five short years were spent. Immersed in State affairs, Catherine de' Medici felt no interest in the sickly and unattractive little girl, though she was the only child of her dead son. It is said that the Princess adored the memory of her father and wept his loss for hours. Of course it is not possible that she actually remembered him, but being a precocious little being, she knew well enough that his death was the cause of the neglect she suffered. The one person who was fitfully kind to her was her uncle, Henri III, who petted her as he would have petted a kitten. The accident of her sex had made him King, and perhaps he remembered this fact. But there was no constant companionship, and the child's feelings were daily and hourly wounded among the paid attendants who did for her the offices which her royal relatives should have performed. "*La Petite Madame,*" as she was called at Court, once was ill for three days in her dreary quarters : not a single relative came near her. Her heart was breaking. At the end of three days the King came. When Isabelle heard his step she pretended to be asleep, and turned over on her side away from him. Three times the King called her by name, but she would hear nothing. Her governess came forward and insisted on her turning to greet him. She gazed at the King with pathetic eyes full of tears. The King took her in his arms, kissed and fondled her,

but there was no responsive caress. She would not speak a word. When he left her the governess asked why she had received her uncle in this manner. It is certain that a child of four or five years old could not have replied as the historians record: "How, Madame, could I be expected to embrace and to show pleasure at the visit of my uncle, when I have been ill three days, and he has never once visited me, or sent any message to make inquiry? I, who am his niece, the daughter of his elder brother, and who does no dishonour to his line." But some reply, bearing this sense, more childish, more moving, the poor little girl must have given. All her life she was in a decline. She was not a member of a laughing group of children, able to forget ill-health in play and companionship. Lonely in life as in death, the only Child of France quitted the scene at five years old.[1]

Except for this pitiful and appealing little figure there was no royal child at Court for more than forty years. The race of the Valois was nearing extinction.

Catherine had now only one son and one daughter left of her family of ten. She had never loved Alençon, yet his death caused her pain enough, if her own letter on the subject was sincere.

"You can imagine what a misery it is to me to live so long that I see every one die before me. And although I know well enough that we must bow to the will of God, that all belongs to Him, that He only lends us our children for as long as He pleases, all the same, nature cannot contrive so well but that one resents the loss one suffers, and I . . . have greater

[1] Isabelle Marie died in the Hôtel d'Anjou in Paris, 9 April, 1578. She was buried at St. Denis.

reason to complain of my sorrow, seeing that all my sons are taken from me, excepting the single one who remains."

The end was not now far off for Catherine. The peace for which she had always longed never came, one civil war succeeding another in spite of her efforts.

At the Castle of Blois, on the 5th of January, 1589, Catherine de' Medici died.

"A few of her servants and some of her familiars wept for her, and so did the King—a very little."

She was refused burial at St. Denis[1] beside her husband in the splendid Renaissance tomb she had built. The Parisians would not allow it, and threatened to throw the body in the Seine or into the common sewer if it were brought there. The great Queen was given burial without royal ceremony in an obscure grave at Blois.

The reign of the last of the Valois was now nearly at an end. Henri III outlived his mother only a few months. He was assassinated by a little monk, Jacques Clément, in August, 1589, who thus brought an infamous reign to an end. The King lived long enough after the blow to name Henri of Navarre as his successor, pointing out that his Huguenot creed need be no bar, for it could be easily changed. The heir fully realized that the people of Paris would not endure a Huguenot king, except at the point of the sword. "Paris is well worth a Mass," he said.

The Valois dynasty had now become only a memory.

[1] Years afterwards the body of Catherine de' Medici was removed from Blois and buried at St. Denis, to be again disinterred at the Revolution.

One representative alone remained alive, Marguerite, Queen of Navarre, and now Queen of France.

Space fails to pursue the fascinating Margot through the mazes of her astonishing career. She presents one of the most complex and remarkable characters in all the pages of history. Like Marguerite of Angoulême, she loved the things of the mind and the spirit, though she was not capable of her high-souled enthusiasms. All great energies in man and all efforts towards human progress in life and in art appealed to her nature. As a wife, her infidelities were so flagrant that even the tolerant Henri of Navarre would not live with her. As she grew older, her peculiarities, like her dress, became grotesque. The exaggerations of her later life seem in a manner epitomized by the tradition of her celebrated petticoat, the *vertugadin*, full of pockets, in which were kept the hearts of her dead lovers, all in little silver boxes. This uncomfortable garment, it was supposed, she always wore, and at night it was hung up by her bed.

Henri IV got his marriage with Margot annulled in 1598. She had struggled valiantly in opposition during six years of negotiations, but when the divorce was accomplished, she accepted defeat in a philosophic spirit. She built herself palaces and made friends with the King's children.

With the spirit of Margot passes away, not only the last vestige of a fatal dynasty, but the last vestige of a whole age. A link between the new world and the old, Margot, in the closing years of life, must have realized how utterly her forbears and her brothers, the Valois Kings, belonged to their own century, and that their personalities would have been impossible

to the thought and energies of the new. Already, before the close of the sixteenth century, their forms and their traditions seem remote and far away. The kings of the House of Valois, like the kings of ages past, have gathered and gone by together.

CHAPTER VII

CHILDREN OF HENRI IV

THE re-marriage of Henri IV was greatly desired in France. There was no heir to the throne. A match was arranged with Marie de' Medici, a niece of Ferdinand, Grand Duke of Tuscany, who had once been a cardinal. Henri had borrowed money from the Grand Duke, and in return promised to marry his niece Marie, whom, of course, he had never seen. He was shown her portrait, painted when she was nineteen. It was that of a very beautiful girl. The marriage was celebrated by proxy at Florence in October 1599.

When Henri went to meet his bride at Lyons, he found her decidedly unlike her portrait. Marie was now twenty-seven. She had a stout figure and round expressionless eyes. Henri was a genial spirit and loved responsiveness in others. He encountered in Marie a cold, indifferent manner, and want of wit. On her part she thought the King old and disagreeable in appearance, and believed him to be a heretic at heart. Soon the ill-matched pair were to discover worse disabilities. The new Queen proved proud and hot tempered, and had a good deal of peevish obstinacy. Henri could make nothing of her. She lived in a state of chronic complaint at his

frequent and open infidelities. Quarrels began at once.

Marie, however, lost no time in obtaining the first place at Court and in the estimation of the whole country. She gave the King children.[1]

In 1601, after fifty-seven years, a Dauphin was again born to France—the boy who at nine years old was fated to succeed as Louis XIII.

The birth was awaited with the most intense anxiety. A magnificent cradle, sent by the Grand Duchess of Tuscany, was in readiness for the Dauphin. It had a canopy of white damask and silver. The Pope was his godfather and supplied the layette: "bands, blankets, cap, and other infant necessaries blessed by His Holiness." The baby was robust, and certainly must have needed a sturdy hold on life to survive the ceremonies of his first appearance. Wine was at once given to the presumably protesting infant, and he was then washed with red wine and oil, and his head anointed with wine and oil of roses. Then his father blessed him, and placing a sword

[1] The children of Henri IV and Marie de' Medici were as follows:—

(1) Louis XIII, born at Fontainebleau, 27 September, 1601; married Anne of Austria 18 October, 1615; died at St. Germain 14 May, 1643.

(2) Elisabeth de France, born 22 November, 1602; married Philip IV of Spain 1615; died 6 October, 1644.

(3) Christine, born 10 February, 1606; married 10 February, 1619, Prince of Piedmont; died 27 December, 1663.

(4) Nicolas de France, duc d'Orléans, born 16 April, 1607; died 17 November, 1611.

(5) Gaston Jean Baptiste, born at Fontainebleau, 7 April, 1608; married first, 1626, Marie, Duchesse de Montpensier, and secondly, Marguerite de Lorraine in 1632; died 2 February, 1660.

(6) Henriette Marie, born 26 November, 1609; married, 11 May, 1625, to Charles I of England; died at Colombes 10 September, 1669.

between his little hands, he prayed that it might be used for God's glory alone, and in defence of the French people.

The health of the Queen does not seem to have been considered at this triumphant moment. All the courtiers—an excited throng—were admitted to her room. The nurse alone showed a glimmering of sense and ventured to remonstrate. The King put his hand on her shoulder. "Hush, hush! This child belongs to all the world. Let every one rejoice." He celebrated the event by kissing every one at Court.

Just a year after the Dauphin came his sister Elisabeth. Marie was bitterly disappointed at the sex of the child. A monk, whom the Pope had once sent her, supposed to be gifted with second sight, had truly predicted, when she was a girl, that she would be Queen of France. He had now also assured her that the baby was to be a boy, and that she would have three sons. Marie considered herself utterly defrauded when Elisabeth made her appearance. Weeping passionate tears she called the baby *Ragasche,* and would not be comforted. The King did his best to bring her to reason, reminding her that if she herself had not been a girl she would not have been Queen of France. No other child was born for five years, and then the birth of another girl, Christine, caused the same scene to be enacted again. At the birth of this second daughter a storm of disappointment swept the country.

The infant mortality of the day was terribly high; every parent expected to lose children, and in this case the hopes of the nation hung on the frail life of the Dauphin Louis. But the year after, another boy was born, Nicolas, duc d'Orléans, and again, a year after,

Gaston, duc d'Anjou. When, in 1609, the last of the family proved a daughter, the little Henriette Marie, who was afterwards to link her destiny with the dark fortunes of the British Stuarts, the nation could afford to look tolerantly upon the event.

The earliest years of these children were by far the happiest they were destined to know. They lived in the light of a father's devotion. Henri IV lavished care and love upon the little group which they were never to experience again.

Perhaps partly owing to a care then by no means the rule in any nursery, none of his children died in infancy. He remembered that he himself was the sole survivor of four brothers. The eldest, the duc de Beaumont, being entrusted to the care of a governess, who felt the cold, was suffocated as an infant, by too many clothes in a hot room. The youngest brother, the duc de Marle, met a more violent fate. His nurse and one of the gentlemen of the household were amusing themselves by passing the infant from one window to another when he was accidentally dropped and killed. Henri IV ascribed his own survival to the prompt action of his grandfather, the King of Navarre, who seized upon Henri, immediately after he was born, wrapped him in the corner of his dressing-gown, and after rubbing his lips with garlic, administered a dose of Juraçon wine—a treatment which the newly born atom was supposed to relish. At all events, he survived these attentions, which were indeed safe and sensible compared with those usually meted out to infants at that time. The rules prescribed in the royal nurseries sometimes involved positive cruelty. In the service of every royal baby there was an official called a "*Remueuse*," or "Rocker." One of

the duties of this attendant was to turn the infant over in its cradle at stated intervals, and this was punctually done, whether the poor child was asleep or awake. No matter how much it cried between whiles, rigid etiquette forbade that it should be turned so much as an inch until the hour struck. Even if a pin were running into the child she was utterly forbidden to give relief by removing it. Before the little victim might be touched the proper official must be found and brought to the cradle. It will be realized that a Child of France might suffer many hardships, in spite of its army of women, Grooms of the Chamber, nurses, governesses, and Children of Honour.

Henri IV, while not attempting to break through the disastrous etiquette of his nursery, remembered his grandfather's precepts and devoted time and thought to the children's health, insisting on immense precautions in the midst of the endless epidemics of the day. The chief home of the children was the Palace of St. Germain, but, as in former generations, much time was spent in progresses from château to château, the course of the plague or other epidemic diseases deciding the direction of travel. Smallpox was always so prevalent that no measures were taken to avoid it, although the mortality was frightful, and of those who recovered, hardly any escaped loss of health or disfigurement. A tender father such as Henri IV must have felt that parentage was an anxious and precarious affair. The children's mother, Marie de' Medici, was extraordinarily indifferent to her children. Occupied with her personal schemes, and engrossed in maintaining the splendours of Court life, she wasted no time on domesticities. Education was left in the hands of Madame de Monglat, and any further interest

shown by the Queen in her children's welfare was concerned with disciplinary methods, rewards, and punishments. There was no love, no understanding, no sympathy.

The Dauphin Louis, naturally headstrong and imperious, showed early evidence of the total failure of his mother's harsh methods. The only happy glimpses of the poor child are those when he is seen with his father, who liked to have him at his table, to give him mouthfuls of jelly and wine, or to toss him an orange. He lovingly watched him with his toys, a silver dinner-set and soldiers. When he was four the boy received a present of a musket and bandolier with ammunition.

These manly toys were covered with gold and silver work, and the bullets were of gold.

All the children rejoiced in the companionship of their father, but the mother's appearance on the scene, cold and critical, put an end to all light-hearted play. The stormy heart of Catherine de' Medici, with all its dark passions, knew a kind of gusty affection for some of her children, but nothing moved Marie de' Medici. In spite of her iron rule she could form no habit of obedience in Louis. Even in such trifles as the taking of medicine—in those days doubtless a very nauseous necessity—it took the persuasions of six people to induce him to swallow a dose.

Except in his home, where he met with the treatment of a slave, this child was hailed as a demi-god. Conveyed in a sumptuous litter, he paid State visits to the city of Paris, where the populace received him with almost religious adoration. Ill-treated and daily humiliated in his own family, he yet knew himself to be the object of unbounded devotion in the country. The effect on his nature was fatal. Gradually his

character darkened, and he became reserved and sullen.

The child hated the idea of being King. "I will not be King—I will not!" he declared. Before his public baptism he was warned to behave well, and the foolish threat was added that if he did not do so another Dauphin would be substituted. His answer sums up the whole tragedy of his young life: "I should not care. I should be very glad. I should then go where I pleased, and no one would follow me."

The poor child was always followed by groups of those composing his immense household. The joy of solitude was denied to all royal persons.

On Maundy Thursday it had been the immemorial custom of the French Kings to wash the feet of thirteen poor men. On one occasion when this was to be done, Henri was ill. He desired his little boy, the Dauphin, to take his place and perform the ceremony. Louis flatly refused. His father was obliged to make a personal appeal to his better feelings, and won his obedience at last so far as to persuade him to appear in the great ball-room where the rite was to be celebrated. The child went there in state, followed by the Princes of the Blood. The thirteen poor men were seated on a platform. All was in readiness, and the ceremony about to begin, when Louis suddenly discovered that the basin to be used was his own. This was the last straw. He burst into tears and refused altogether to wash the poor men's feet. Ultimately, the chaplain did it. The Dauphin was asked why he objected to doing a duty that was done by the King? He sensibly replied that he was not the King.

Henri spoilt the boy. "He is in my place. Get out of it," Louis said to his father at Mass. The King

obeyed. He longed for the child's affection and was pathetically grateful for any demonstrative love. "At five the King comes home from hunting," writes an old diarist. "The Dauphin goes running to meet the King, who grows pale with joy and gladness, kisses and holds him long embraced."

It may easily be imagined how much joy and pride the father would feel in the following letter :—

"FATHER,—I have given mother a great deal of pleasure since you went away. I went to war in her room and to reconnoitre the enemy. They were all crowding together in the alcove of mother's bed, in which I slept. You may be sure I roused them with my drum. Father, I have been to your arsenal, and M. de Rong showed me the whole place full of beautiful weapons, and lots and lots of big guns, and then he gave me some very good jam and a pretty little silver cannon. Now all I want is a little horse to pull it. To-morrow mother is going to send me back to St. Germain, where I will pray hard to God for you, father, so that He may keep you from all danger and make me a very good boy, and give me the happiness of soon being able to pay you my very humble respects. I'm very sleepy, father. Fifi Vendôme will tell you everything else, and I can but add that I am, father, your very humble and very obedient son and servant, DAUPHIN"

Louis, though a strange child, had certain engaging qualities. The affection of his father was the only thing that moved his emotion, but he had generous impulses. Something of the princely sense of *noblesse oblige* in little things would make him wish to overpay services done for him. Madame de Monglat remon-

strated with him for asking four crowns for the porters who had carried his luggage to Fontainebleau. Two crowns, she pointed out, would be ample payment. "Ah, no, Mamanga, they are so poor!" An unfortunate little Red Indian had cruelly been sent over from Quebec as a curiosity to amuse the Court, where *le petit Canada* awakened a fleeting interest. The exile paid for the amusing experiment with his life, very quickly contracting consumption. Louis, the Dauphin, saw the pitiful little object from a palace window and sent out some of his soup. Shortly after he reserved half his own dessert of cherries and had them put aside to be given to *le petit Canada*. It was too late, however, for the small exile had died the day before.

It was difficult to win the affection or the respect of the Dauphin and to be quite at ease with a child of so much coldness and dignity. With the fatal misunderstanding of child-nature common in that age, the boy was from his babyhood the victim of a system of repression. He was not even allowed to outgrow his toys—they were taken from him; or rather he was coerced into making his favourites up into a parcel for his younger brother.

The Dauphin, with his sisters Elisabeth and Christine, were all baptized in a batch in 1606. Private baptism was of course always administered a few days after birth, but the public ceremony was postponed until it could be made the pretext for a splendid pageant. The function was to have taken place at Notre-Dame in Paris, but the plague having lately arrived in the city the Court hurriedly removed to Fontainebleau. The great hall there not being large enough to contain the throng of guests, the immense area of

the courtyard, still the most beautiful feature of the palace, was enclosed with gold woven tapestry. The space was lined by the Swiss Guards, each holding a lighted torch. The Queen's robe on this occasion was of velvet and gold, studded with thirty-two thousand pearls and three thousand diamonds. The whole scene was of unrivalled glory, even in that age of dazzling pageantry.

It was during the heat of summer, but the children were all three placed in State beds, covered with ermine draperies, under canopies of crimson velvet. Each bed was surrounded with privileged officials. The outer coverlet on Princess Elisabeth was withdrawn by two countesses, a third lifted her from the bed, a fourth undressed her, and a fifth robed her in state costume. The baby Christine went through the same performance, while the little Dauphin was attended only by Princesses of the Blood.

Arrived at the scene of the ceremony, the Dauphin was placed upon a table. The officiating Cardinal approached him. The affair must all have been very well rehearsed, for when asked, " Sir, what do you ask ? " the five-year-old boy replied, " The Sacramental ceremonies of baptism." " Have you already been baptized ? " " Yes, *Dieu merci*." He recited without hesitation the Lord's Prayer, the " Hail, Mary," and the Creed. In the midst of the stupendous solemnity one touch reminded the courtiers that, after all, he was a little human boy of five years old. When the salt of exorcism was placed in his mouth he said, " I've swallowed it, and it was quite nice."

Any real happiness vouchsafed to Louis came in early youth, when all the six royal children, united in the fear of their mother and her methods, loved each

other, indulged in the innocent quarrels so soon forgotten, played, studied, hunted, danced, and acted together.

Elisabeth, fair haired and dark eyed, inherited the good looks of her mother's early girlhood; she was high spirited and intellectual. Little Christine was very delicate; there are few records of her individuality, and she is chiefly mentioned in connexion with various infantile diseases. The other three children were much younger than the Dauphin, but he loved them very warmly, and was fond of their company. It was a grave mistake to remove him from the nursery at St. Germain at seven years old, and from the care of "Mamanga," to quarters at the Louvre, under the tutorship of M. de Souvré. All the familiar wholesome give and take of nursery life among those who loved him, but did not trouble to pay him respect, would have been far better for his training than intercourse only with *enfants d'honneur*—boys of his own age, chosen among the distinguished families of France. To these companions he was naturally always Dauphin and master.

All the children would know very well their father's first wife, Marguerite de Valois—once a queen and now a somewhat erratic but entertaining private person, living in the Château de Madrid, in the Bois de Boulogne—one of the hunting lodges of François I—or at the Hôtel de Sens, or in the palace she built for herself opposite the Louvre. Extravagant, quarrelsome, racy, even as his ex-wife her activities continued to give the King a good deal of trouble, but he and Queen Marie received her with the highest honours.

The royal children paid Margot state visits, and must have loved the flood of her kindness and quaint

humour, her large good nature, her vivid interest in all that concerned the King and the Court. Nothing pleased her so much as to bring back, here and there, the forgotten glories of the dead Valois days, reintroducing old-world dances, ballets, and masks such as she had known in her brilliant girlhood. She sincerely loved her husband's children, especially the Dauphin, to whom, at her death in 1615, she bequeathed her property.

The main event of Henri's reign happened in 1598, before his second marriage, when the Edict of Nantes was issued, a decree that guaranteed liberty of thought and freedom of worship to the Huguenots.

The King's example in forsaking the Protestant faith had been followed by nearly all the great Huguenot nobles. The reformed faith lost ground at Court and in the great castles. After the Edict the country was at peace.

It was perhaps natural that the King got most of the praise. No King of France was ever so beloved. He said he wanted every peasant to have a fowl in the pot on Sunday. This simple aspiration raised him to a pinnacle of popularity which has been maintained ever since.[1] He was a tried soldier, manly, and practical, with more than a touch of the dash and hazardous spirit belonging to the old chivalry that France still worshipped.

Though he knew the value of peace, Henri allowed himself to be drawn into preparations for war. In

[1] At the Revolution, when all the royal graves in St. Denis were desecrated by the mob, 12 October, 1793, and the bodies thrown into lime and burnt, the body of Henri IV was the first to be disinterred. A soldier looking upon it exclaimed, "I, too, am a French soldier!" and reverently cut off a lock of the beard. The statue of Henri IV was the last to fall in Paris in August, 1792.

the spring of 1610 he had collected three great armies and intended to attack both Spain and Austria. All preparations were made, but wars in those days seem to have waited for the convenience of domestic events. He only delayed to see the coronation of his Queen.

Marie de' Medici had given a good deal of trouble about her coronation, but it must be conceded that she had grounds of dissatisfaction in the fact that it had been put off or delayed for ten years. She was now pressing the matter with determination. She had a bad temper, and if she lost it she took five days to recover it. Henri loved and sought domestic peace. He gave in at last, and the date of the coronation was fixed for 13 May at St. Denis.

From that moment the King became sad and *distrait*. He longed to be with his army, then setting forth for the Netherlands, and he was filled besides with premonitions of disaster. "Ah, my friend," he said to Sully in Paris, "how I dislike this coronation! No, I shall never leave this town: they will kill me; there is nothing else for them to do." There had already been at least five attempts on the King's life. He had many enemies, both personal and political.

The Queen was crowned with all the magnificence she claimed. All her children were present. On leaving the Church the King wished her to go out first. She refused. "*Passez, Madame,*" he said, with emotion, "*c'est à vous de commander ici.*" As if sharing the sad presentiments of the King, the populace showed no enthusiasm. The Queen's triumphal entry into Paris was fixed for 15 May. On the 16th Henri would be at last free to join his army. He had thus two days to spend at the Louvre.

Melancholy and restless, he found them insupportably long. On the 14th, part of the day was spent with his children. The baby Henriette was brought to see him, and he played with her and Gaston. Elisabeth and Christine were brought from St. Denis to the Louvre by Madame de Monglat. They were taken to see their father, who kissed them and asked if they had dined. Madame de Monglat said they had dined before leaving St. Denis. It must have been the first visit of the two little girls to the royal burial-place. They were full of having seen the relics and treasures there. Gaston (then duc d'Anjou) had looked fixedly at the figure on one tomb. Some one said it was his father. The boy not unnaturally cried and screamed. "It is because he loves me," said the King. "He cried 'Papa' all through the ceremony yesterday." Nothing pleased and flattered him so much as any manifestation of his children's love. As he left the Louvre that fatal afternoon he saw his little Gaston in the courtyard of the palace, and stopped to speak to the boy, who was then two years old. He pointed out the courtier Bassompierre and asked the child if he knew him. Then he passed on to his coach, which seems to have been the only conveyance the King and Queen possessed between them. It was a long, low, open cart, with a canopy supported by eight pillars. The floor was very near the ground. There were no windows and no sides. Leather blinds were fixed to the roof. It must have been a roomy vehicle, as the duc d'Epernon, the duc de Montbazon, and five other gentlemen were inside. The coachman asked for orders. The King only said, "Take me away from here." They drove towards the Arsenal. The curtains of the carriage were raised, according to

custom. His courtiers drew his attention in the streets to the decorations arranged for the entry of the Queen. He refused even to glance at them. The carriage was now stopped for a moment in the rue de la Ferronnerie, a very narrow street, by two heavy carts, one loaded with wine, and one with hay. The running footmen, who were always beside the King's carriage, left it to help clear a passage. Now the murderer, who had followed all the way, saw and seized his chance. He got upon one of the wheels, thrust himself into the carriage, and, leaning across d'Epernon, struck the King in the side with his knife. The King said, "I am wounded; it is nothing," but there was time to strike him yet again, piercing the heart and killing him instantly.

With the stoical courage of the fanatic, the murderer made no attempt either to escape arrest or to deny his crime.

The carriage with the King's dead body drove back to the Louvre, now a scene of indescribable confusion and grief. The frantic sobs of the Queen could be heard before she entered the death-chamber with her question, "Is the King dead?" "Madame, the Kings of France do not die. This is not the moment to abandon yourself to grief—it is the time to ensure the tranquillity of the kingdom."

Outside in the city, where no certain news was known as yet, there were cries and dark rumours. The churches were filled with pitiful prayers to God not to take away the King.

The little sons and daughters of France, with the despairing Queen, assembled at the death-bed. The young Dauphin, now Louis XIII, was beside her. He was eight years old. "Pray with me, my son. There

lies your happiness and mine. The sturdy tree has fallen, and the saplings are still weak and frail."

Louis was in terror. He cried passionately, and said if only he had been present when the deed was done, he would have killed the murderer with his sword. None of the children were spared the knowledge of what had happened, or the scenes that followed. Gaston demanded a dagger and said he would not outlive his father. It is not surprising that the little King begged that night to be allowed to sleep with his tutor, M. de Souvré, " lest dreams should come."

The three princes assisted at the ceremony of sprinkling their father's body with holy water as it lay in state in the lower hall of the Louvre. The little girls were also present, even the baby Henriette Marie, only a few months old, had an *asperge* put into her little hand that she might also take part in the ceremony. Louis was dressed in purple, and the long train of his cloak was borne by Princes of the Blood. The two smaller boys cried bitterly. Louis never shed a tear.

Marie de' Medici claimed undivided authority over state affairs at the assembled Parliament. It was granted, and her regency proclaimed. Louis made a pathetic little speech.

After his accession he was hardly ever with his brothers and sisters. The Queen's wish was to isolate him as much as possible. He liked the companionship of his half-brother, Alexandre de Vendôme, three years older than himself. The Queen had him sent away. " They want to take him away," said Louis, " because I love him." He felt a settled bitterness towards his mother which never lifted.

The coronation of the young King, Louis XIII, was

LOUIS XIII AS A BOY
From a painting in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence

held at Reims five months after his father's death. At the ceremony he bore himself with a good deal less dignity than he usually showed, and it is a pleasant relief to know that he could be like an ordinary mischievous little boy. The Court stayed at Reims several days to celebrate a series of solemn functions. Louis varied the programme by playing at horses with his *enfants d'honneur*.

The coronation ceremonies lasted two hours. The anointing over, the King had to be kissed by all the peers. He playfully boxed the ears of the duc d'Elbœuf, and tried to tread on the train of the dignified official who preceded him to the altar.

A few days later the anointed King touched nine hundred sick for the " King's Evil." He turned pale, but endured the trial well.

He rode into Paris on his state entry, a gallant little figure in scarlet, mounted on a white horse. Already his character made its impression. " The King listens to everything, remembers everything, knows everything, and gives no sign of it."

CHAPTER VIII

CHILDHOOD OF LOUIS XIII

SEVEN miserable years were to pass before Louis XIII gained strength to throw off his mother's yoke. The relations between them are well expressed in the story of the young King entering a room where his mother was seated. She rose at his entrance, according to the demands of etiquette. "I would be better pleased," remarked the boy, "with less obeisance and less whipping." Every one laughed, and the Queen smiled "rather uncomfortably." It is said that during all the years of her regency the Queen never once kissed the little boy.

There was a moment when the glory and greatness of his father's reign seemed promised. Louis was gifted not only with intellect, but with noble impulses; all was lost in the tyranny of his mother and the hopeless defects in his education. Brought up to a love of magnificence and display, and taught that indulgence in this was the duty of princes, the boy considered that all effort could end here, and that he was free to devote himself to hunting and hawking, and to the tame animals that formed one of his chief interests. This love of animals, which would to-day be thought an engaging characteristic, was considered by the serious chroniclers of that age almost a mental

defect. They mournfully relate that the King loved his dogs, and spoke to them in a language of his own, and refer with melancholy contempt to his ostrich farm, his falcons, and his horses. A monkey was a calamity, and a yellow parrot almost a crime.

The King's doctor, Hérouard, who faithfully kept a journal of all his doings, records that he was much interested in a *marcassine* (female wild pig), a strange pet, which a water-carrier named Bonnet had tamed and kept in one of the royal kitchens. It happened that Bonnet was killed by a fall. The little *marcassine* was inconsolable. All night she lay down lamenting, and went about searching for her dead master. With most unpig-like devotion she let herself die of hunger, steadfastly refusing all food. The King wrote a little verse about her.

> " Il y avait en ma cuisine
> Une petite marcassine,
> Laquelle est morte de douleur
> D'avoir perdu son gouverneur."

The arid and limited education the child received was not calculated to develop the sympathies of his nature. A great deal might have been done through his affections, which in his early boyhood were warm and sincere.

Louis felt very deeply the death of his little brother in 1611. This child is said to have been christened Nicolas, though the older chroniclers mention him only as " N. de France," the usual custom when writing of a child not publicly baptized. From his birth his chance of life was slender, and in that age of medical ignorance and superstition little could be done to relieve his condition. He was always at St. Germain.

His brothers and sisters loved and petted him, and even the cold heart of his Medici mother softened to the suffering baby. With his enormous head and skeleton body he was dying all his life. He lived only four years.

Just before his death Louis was in Paris, but was looking forward to joining his brothers and sisters at St. Germain. "My sisters will be very glad to see me shoot with the harquebus. Mamanga (Madame de Monglat) will ask M. de Souvré how he can allow me to shoot, and will go and say so to the Queen, my mother." But by the time he reached St. Germain the little brother was desperately ill. He had convulsions, but, recovering consciousness, saw his brother the King beside him. "Good night, *mon petit papa*, you do me too much honour in taking the trouble to come and see me." Louis left the room in tears, and passionately asked if there was no way of saving the child. He was advised to pray. Some one suggested a votive offering, to our Lady of Loretto, of a silver image the same height as Nicolas. "Send to Paris at once for it. Let them make haste," said Louis, returning to his prayers. The King woke in the night and asked for news of his brother. The child had died at the very time. Just as he was passing away, he saw a vision of his father, murdered a year before, and it is easy to understand how the remembrance of the kindly gallant King, the "*Bon Papa*" who had made the one radiant spot in a clouded existence, with his unfailing tenderness, would rise to the imagination of the dying child. "I will kiss him ever so much," are his last recorded words.

The little fellow had been betrothed at a year old to Mademoiselle de Montpensier, one of the greatest heiresses in France. After his death this little girl

was brought to visit Marie de' Medici arrayed in a widow's dress! The Queen, however, decreed that weeds should not be worn, and promised Mademoiselle her next son Gaston as bridegroom.

In 1611 we see all the remaining children together. Elisabeth was allowed to arrange a comedy, for the amusement of the Court at St. Germain. The play chosen was Garnier's "Bradamante." The entertainment was highly successful. All the children acted. Christine, then five years old, was assigned a part in which she had to speak a few words, not because she could act, but in case she should cry.

Gaston, aged three, spoke the Prologue, of six lines.

"He carried a pike, which he waved to the audience with such grace that by this action, and by the little leap which he executed at its conclusion, he drew to himself great applause." The child was promoted to breeches for the occasion, a change of dress which was a source of great pride, but which so hampered his movements off the stage that he was put back into petticoats.

Gaston was destined to play the rôle of next heir to the throne for no less than thirty years—a brilliant prospect shattered at last.

Louis was eleven when his mother began to talk to him of marriage.

"My son, I wish to have you married. Do you wish it?"

"*Je le veux bien, Madame.*"

The boy was perfectly indifferent. He had not put away childish things.

Falconry was his passion. Hérouard has left a

description of his first day's sport in the spring of 1614.

" M. de Souvré makes the King go to the Hunt for the first time ; makes him take a hunting skirt lined with sable ; takes it reluctantly, saying that all those who see him will laugh at him, because he is dressed as a peasant. He disputes for 1½ hours. At last he makes up his mind and goes to fly his kite on the plain of Grenelle, where he mounts his horse and takes the kite. Having returned to the Louvre, has the kite thrown out of the window and gives it its life. The 19th. Sunday. Feeds 2 little cocks, and gives them Claret to make them brave.

" The 30th. Easter Day. Goes to Mass at Bourbon, returns to the Grand Gallery of the Louvre ; touches 450 ill people, the chief doctor, Hérouard, holding their heads ; goes to the Sermon at the Carmelites and to Vespers at St. Victor. In the evening, before going to bed, plays with hens till half-past 9, prays to God, goes to sleep till five hours after midnight. The 31st. Monday morning. Goes by the gallery to the Tuileries, a stone-falcon (or merlin) on his fist, which he makes fly ; to the Capuchins for Mass. In the evening goes to bed till 9.30, gets up to see opposite, beyond the Seine, the stable of Queen Marguerite, which was burning before her house ; sends to visit her a gentleman named the Sieur de la Passe ; at quarter to eleven, back to bed.

" The 8. Tuesday, at 8 o'clock, enters his carriage and arrives at Angenere at 10.30. After dinner goes to shoot with his harquebus at the little birds in the garden. M. le Souvré takes him to play cards in a barn. He gets bored. He does not like inactive games. Goes away to milk the cows."

At this time, Charles d'Albert, Seigneur de Luynes, had the charge of the King's falcons. He was a man of thirty-five, and Louis grew to look upon him as his greatest friend and most trusted adviser. A fine sportsman, with an attractive personality, he won from the impressionable boy a warm affection. His companionship gave the King a great deal of happiness. The Queen-Mother and her Italian advisers, Concini and his wife Leonora, hated and feared his influence, but recognized that he was a power to be conciliated.

Louis XIII came of age in September 1614. The States General were convened in Paris, at the Convent of the Augustine. The Queen and her son were there, Louis morose, and dressed in white, also "*cette delicate et fragile Elisabeth, fiancée au roi d'Espagne, lumineuse dans sa robe de Toile d'argent.*" Among the clergy assembled at this historic gathering was a young man who was eventually to rule France, Armand Jean du Plessis de Richelieu. He was twenty-nine, and had been made Bishop of Luçon at the age of twenty-two. At this State meeting two royal marriages were arranged. The bride of Louis was to be the little Infanta of Spain, known to history as Anne of Austria, and Elisabeth of France was to marry Anne's brother, Philip IV of Spain.

In August 1615 the royal wedding party set forth from Paris to Bordeaux. An army went with them, and a train of followers of all descriptions, many of them undesirable travellers, who " filled the hospitals and the taverns on the way " with a variety of diseases. Queen Marie herself, with the bride Elisabeth, took smallpox at Poitiers. The disease must have been of a mild type, for the Court only remained there from 14 to 28 September. After a journey of six

weeks, Bordeaux was reached, and the marriages were celebrated by proxy. With one of his rare flashes of mischief, Louis jogged the elbow of his sister as she was signing the contract.

The party then proceeded to the Bidassoa River, where the exchange of Princesses was to be made.

The Princess Elisabeth was a simple, gentle child, but she was capable of a good deal of spirit. At the age of ten she had a separate Court, "in the midst of which," says a Spanish Ambassador, "she received, with the grace of a girl and the premature dignity of a queen, the elaborate homage of her future subjects."

The parting between Louis and his sister was moving in the extreme. The poor children could not conceal their emotion. Every one wept, except the Spanish Ambassador, who was shocked at such want of self-control in royal persons. He recalled Elisabeth to a sense of duty.

"Come, come, Princess of Spain." So under his cold eye the brother and sister parted for ever.

The punctilious regulations of Spanish etiquette, observed with more than religious solemnity, were extremely trying to the patience of the young French girl, fresh from the less rigid customs of her own Court. Sumptuous pavilions were erected on either side of the river, and another was built on boats moored in the middle of the stream, where the actual exchange was to be made. There were endless and interminable delays while every point of tradition and precedent was weighed and discussed. The boredom was unendurable to Elisabeth, who, having reached the limit of her patience, in a sudden outburst makes it clear that the centre of all the tiresome magnificence was just a little angry child of thirteen. On hearing

of yet another delay, she became red with temper, took off her gloves, and flung them in the fire, demanding to know when the ceremonies would be finished. There is a sense of relief in knowing that Elisabeth burnt her gloves, though they were doubtless jewelled and costly affairs, for she stands out in history at once with the passion and reality of a human being.

Elisabeth, unlike the black-haired Elisabeth de Valois, is described as a handsome girl, with very fair hair and large, expressive dark eyes. The dress of the period could not have enhanced her beauty. Fashion was marked by monstrous caprices. Women rode on horseback with dresses reaching only to the knee, and the legs encased in light velvet pantaloons. In ordinary dress huge *vasquines*, or rollers, encircled the waist and extended the folds of the petticoat. Braces of metal expanded the sleeves. There were bows of ribbon all over the person, each with a coquettish name: the *galant* on the top of the head, the *mignon* on the heart, the *favori* on the breast, and the *badin* on the handle of the fan. The *affiquet* of precious stones worn on the left breast was the *assassin*. In some such guise the Princess Elisabeth must have set forth to meet her unknown bridegroom at Burgos. The boy of eleven was speechless with admiration or with shyness. She entered the city riding on a white horse with a silver saddle and housings of velvet and pearls.

The Spanish Princess, blue-eyed and fair-haired, wore a robe of green satin, gold embroidered, with wide hanging sleeves looped with diamonds. A small ruff of Flemish lace was round the neck, her light hair fell in curls, and she wore a small hat of green satin trimmed with strings of pearls, and surmounted by a

heron's plume. An enormous pannier spoilt the grace of her childish figure.

The two girls met in the Ile des Faisans, and gave the kiss of ceremony. Then Anne passed on to seek her fortunes in her new kingdom of France, and Elisabeth was delivered to Spain.

Louis XIII and the Infanta were married at Bordeaux. The children were of the same age. "The King often looked at the Queen and smiled; she, although sinking under the weight of her robes and jewels, perspiring big drops, could not help smiling at him with marvellous grace and majesty."

The pair entered Paris 16 May, 1616. The King was on horseback, and his bride in a litter so ornamented that nothing could be seen but precious stones and embroidery. The King by this time was very much bored with the whole affair. No one could induce him to take an interest in the little Spanish girl who could not share his pleasures of hunting and hawking. Four years passed before they began life together as husband and wife.

Louis hated the Concini, but in his minority had been powerless to prevent the flood of honours his mother had poured upon these adventurers. The husband was created Marquis d'Ancre and was made a Marshal of France. Leonora controlled all the inner affairs of the Court. Both became enormously rich, and were thoroughly hated both by the people and the nobles.

The young King, guided by de Luynes, resolved to rid himself of these intruders. While they remained in power there would never be peace between the Government and the people, or between the Huguenots and the Catholics. It is not known that the young King had

actually resolved on their destruction. It is certain that he gave the orders for the arrest of Concini in such a manner that the Captain of his Guard, giving a decided interpretation of his meaning, shot him dead. "Sire," said de Luynes, "from this time you are really King of France." Louis had all his people on his side. Savage joy was shown in Paris and throughout the country at the death of Concini. His wife Leonora must have known that her hour also had come. A few weeks later she was arrested and beheaded on a charge of witchcraft.

The whole life of Marie de' Medici was bound up in the Concini, but she could not save them. Their fall meant her own disgrace, and a little pity must be felt for her when she was ordered to leave the Court and retire to the Castle of Blois.

The King's resolution was definitely expressed for a youth of sixteen, but he was at last sure of his ground.

"Madame, I have come here to say good-bye and to assure you that I shall always care for you as my mother. I have wished to relieve you of the trouble you take in my affairs; it is time that you should rest, and that I should manage them. This is my resolution, not to suffer any one else to take command in my kingdom. At this moment I am the King. I have given the necessary orders for your journey and ordered the priest to accompany you. You will have news of me when you reach Blois. Adieu, Madame. Love me, and I shall be a good son to you."

Her fall caused temporary eclipse to the star of Richelieu. But Richelieu knew when to suffer eclipse. Meanwhile, he was exiled from the Court to Avignon.

Bitterly weeping, Marie de' Medici took leave of her

children, Christine, now eleven years old, and the little Gaston and Henriette, who were both too young to understand the meaning of so sorrowful a parting. Not that Marie cared for her children, but to be deprived of their charge marked the extreme depth of her disgrace. She had quite clearly plotted with the Concini against the King, but the sight of her sufferings as Queen and mother moved the nation to murmurs of compassion. Her exile lasted three years, and during that time Louis, without a word to his mother, arranged and carried out the marriage of his sister Christine to Victor Amadeus, Prince of Piedmont. Marie did not submit tamely to such an indignity.

It was Richelieu who brought about peace and secured the reconciliation of Marie with her son. They met at the Castle of Couzières, near Tours.

" My son has grown taller since I saw him," was the mother's natural comment.

" I have grown, Madame, for your service," was the King's courtly reply. There were kisses and a great many tears over their temporary reconciliation.

Gaston and Henriette were now the only royal children left at Court. The days were chiefly passed at St. Germain with Madame de Monglat. Gaston, whose character was slight and disloyal, was to live to be a scourge to his brother the King. Like the King he had, in boyhood, no leanings whatever to study, hated books, and could not be induced to apply his mind to any serious pursuit. He had a taste for magnificence and profusion, but no real love of art. Henriette was always a fascinating creature, bright of eye and wit. That she was wayward and spoilt was owing to her mother's injudicious training. She who lived to be known as "*La Reine Malheureuse*"

was once the light and spirit of her world. Moreover, unlike her brothers and sisters, she was passionately attached to her mother. In appearance she was always *petite*, with a long face, a fine brow, perfect complexion, and eyes dark, soft, and brilliant. In spite of her few inches she had a dignified carriage: "*dans toute sa personne quelque chose de noble et de grand.*"

Henriette writes a little letter to Madame de Monglat.

"MAMANGAT,—I beg you to forgive me if you saw the little temper I was in this morning.

"I cannot be good all of a sudden, but I shall do everything I can to please you. In the meantime, I beg you not to be angry with me any more, who am and will always be all my life, *Mamangat*—Your affectionate friend, HENRIETTE"

Few details survive of the education of the Bourbon children. They certainly received nothing like the training of their Valois predecessors, and the routine of nursery and schoolroom was perpetually interrupted by some State function or other, in which the children must bear a part. It is certain, however, that Henriette must have spent a good deal of time in dancing. The Court ballets were numerous and intricate in their figures, and Henriette was always among the most graceful of the dancers. She had a beautiful voice, and the love of music that was a family characteristic in all the children of Marie de' Medici.

It was while Henriette was dancing that she was first seen by the young English prince with whom her destiny was to be linked.

In 1623, Charles, Prince of Wales, was in Paris with the Duke of Buckingham, in the course of his romantic journey to see his proposed bride, the Infanta Maria of Spain. The pair travelled in disguise under the names of Tom Smith and John Brown. James I of England was much opposed to his beloved son undertaking a journey which might prove hazardous. He wrote a series of quaint letters in which he calls the Prince of Wales "Baby Charles" and gives Buckingham the nickname "Dog Steenie." Casual travellers must have had easy access to the French Court, for Charles and his companion saw the rehearsal of a ballet, in which the young Queen Anne and her little sister-in-law Henriette and the boy Gaston danced. Charles passed on to Spain without specially noticing the little girl of thirteen whom he was not to see again till he met her at Dover as his wife. His thoughts were set on the unknown Infanta. He saw her, and spent some time in Spain, but the negotiations for the marriage fell through. The Infanta herself was opposed to marrying a heretic, and was given no opportunity of really knowing Charles.

It was in Spain, however, that the idea of a French marriage was put into the head of the English Prince by the Queen herself, the little Elisabeth de Bourbon. Her interviews were much restricted, as she was ceaselessly guarded by the Spaniards. But she managed to speak a few words in French, a forbidden language at Court, in which she warned him that the match with the Infanta would be broken, and suggested that it would be politic to marry her own sister, Henriette de France.

The French marriage followed, after a world of opposition and argument in which all the powers of

Europe seem to have joined. In the April of 1625, James I of England died, and in the May following the little Henriette Marie was made Queen of England. She was fifteen years old.

The marriage was celebrated on 11 May at Notre-Dame, which was hung with marvellous tapestries. The duc de Chevreuse, dressed in mourning relieved with diamonds, stood proxy for King Charles I. The bride's robe was of cloth of gold and silver, embroidered with the lilies of France, and showered with diamonds and other gems. The actual marriage took place on a raised platform outside the Cathedral, for Henriette was marrying a Protestant.

The bride did not leave France till 23 June. She arrived at Dover at seven in the evening. Charles was at Canterbury, and came to Dover Castle next morning, when the married pair were introduced to each other. Poor little Henriette was greatly overcome. She could not finish the little set speech she had learned for the occasion : " *Sire, je suis venue en ce pays de votre Majesté pour être commandé de vous.*" Tears stopped the rest. But the chivalrous heart of Charles went out to this frightened child ; he put his arms round her and kissed her. Soon they were talking gaily. He found his bride taller than he had been led to expect. He looked at her shoes to see if she wore high heels. She said, " Sire, I stand upon mine own feet. I have no help from art. Thus high am I ; neither higher nor lower."

The childhood of Henriette was passed. She inspired in her husband a true, tender, lasting passion. For ten years she knew a personal happiness as wife and mother. Born under a tragic star, her few years of happiness were followed by a flood of every kind of

sorrow. She was fated to endure the stress of the Great Rebellion, and to see all that was most sacred to her go down before a nation's anger and revolt. She shared all but the last climax of her husband's misfortunes.

Nineteen years after the wedding, a broken, despairing woman, she came back to France, "*La Reine Malheureuse,*" there to live out the last dark days of her life.

So passes away the first Bourbon generation of the Children of France.

There were now no children at Court. Silence fell on the royal nurseries—a heavy silence not to be lifted for many a day. Louis XIII and Anne of Austria were childless.

Domestic affairs at Court did not run smoothly. Louis was miserable in his relations both to his mother and his wife. He had never loved either the one or the other.

The marriage of Gaston, who was now eighteen, was a necessary step in the interests of the realm. The project threw the royal family and the courtiers into opposite camps. Marie de' Medici had from his babyhood promised her favourite child Gaston the richest heiress in France, Marie de Bourbon, duchesse de Montpensier. She now wished the plan carried into effect, and she had the support of Richelieu. The poor, childless Queen, Anne of Austria, opposed the idea, not from any reasonable objection, but because of a natural and very human shrinking from the nearer vision of an heir of France who would be no child of hers. In his own way the King shared this feeling. The upshot of it all was that the marriage went forward, and was celebrated at Nantes at midnight, with very

little royal pomp, on 5 August, 1626. The bride was short, plain, slightly deformed, with a dull expression and slow of understanding. The pair took up their residence in the Tuileries. The King and Queen, in the Louvre, soon had the mortification of knowing that a child was to be born to Gaston. The whole nation breathlessly awaited the birth of a prince.

On 29 May, 1627, the child was born; not an heir to France, but a little girl, who in later days was to make her mark in history as La Grande Mademoiselle. Three days after her birth the mother died.

Anne of Austria, in her relief that the child was not a boy, showed the little Marie Louise a great deal of kindness. She represented the only child life at the Court, a gloomy place in those days, and no doubt as she grew older Marie Louise would give a good deal of amusement to grown-up people, for she was a talker, and very early learnt the importance of her father's position in the country. Gaston played with his daughter, but cared nothing for her training. Her life was one round of amusement, and no one troubled about her education. She was a stout child, with a fat face and an air of stupidity. Critics described her as an unpleasant little girl, who, as she grew older, became so intolerable to every one that, at nine years old, she was sent to a convent for a few months. It may be doubted whether the religious life had any lasting effect upon her character, but the experiment relieved the Queen and the Court for a while from a great deal of pertinacious comment and a world of embarrassing questions.

CHAPTER IX

CHILDREN OF LOUIS XIII

THE year 1638 brought a momentous change to Louis XIII and his wife. An event happened which overset all the calculations and pretensions of Gaston and the Princes of the Blood. On 5 October, at St. Germain, a Dauphin was born, the child who, as Louis XIV, was to reap all the glories sown by Richelieu. The parents had been married for twenty-three years without a child, and were almost dazed at this happiness, which was the first they had ever shared. There was very little enthusiasm at Court, where many who had cherished hopes of presumptive honours suddenly found themselves of no account, but throughout the country there was sincere rejoicing. Two years after the birth of Louis, on 21 September, 1640, was born his brother Philippe.[1]

La Grande Mademoiselle was eleven when her father, Gaston d'Orléans, thus ceased to be heir of the throne of France. With all her precocious knowledge

[1] From Philippe (who received the title of duc d'Orléans after the death of Gaston) were descended the Orléans branch of the royal family, and the later generations of the Bourbons. At Court the King's brother bore the title of "*Monsieur*." He married first, in 1661, Henrietta, daughter of Charles I of England, and second, Charlotte Elizabeth, daughter of the Elector Palatine. He died at St. Cloud, 1701.

THE DAUPHIN (LOUIS XIV) WITH HIS NURSE
From a painting at Versailles

of the world, Mademoiselle still retained enough of the uncalculating charm of childhood to be genuinely pleased at the baby's arrival. She went to St. Germain to see the new cousin. The Queen was delighted and touched by her real pleasure in the baby. To please the child, she said, "*Vous serez ma belle-fille.*" It was an unfortunate remark for the girl's happiness, setting alight an ambition which was only quenched in the future with a great deal of suffering. She continued to visit the baby every day, and called him "*Mon petit mari,*" to the amusement of the King and Queen. Unluckily for Mademoiselle, her godfather Richelieu got wind of the little comedy. He was extremely displeased, ordered her removal from St. Germain to Paris, and, sending for the little girl, administered a reprimand, telling her she was too old for such jokes. Her pride must have resented the interference, but she was obliged to obey his rule that in future she should only go to St. Germain from the Tuileries once in two months.

The sombre Louis XIII could take little pleasure in his sons. Suspicion of his wife's actions found food in the children's very earliest training. The Dauphin once shrieked with fright at the sight of his father in a nightcap. The King wore one of the extinguisher variety, which doubtless made an awe-inspiring change in his appearance to the imagination of a small child. Louis was deeply offended and hurt at his son's protesting yells. He was quite sure that the Queen was bringing up the children to fear and hate him. Brooding darkly over the idea, he threatened to take both the boys from their mother's care.

That the King's thoughts were habitually suspicious

is not surprising. Since the time of his boyhood, when his own mother intrigued against his interests, never a year passed without some plot against his life. All his friends, except Richelieu, seemed capable of treachery.

He was not fated to see the children he had so greatly desired and so eagerly welcomed grow beyond babyhood. The ill-health which had pursued him all his days settled at last into a definite decline. The two little boys could never remember their father except as a sombre and morose invalid. In the midst of his sufferings he was to endure the misfortune of losing the comfort and support of his great minister Richelieu, who died in 1642. He survived him only five months.

The King's illness was a lingering one. Minute details of each day were written by his faithful valet Dubois. Sometimes, when feeling a little better, he would get up from his bed to paint caricatures, a favourite amusement, or he would have quartettes sung in his room. He had a long chair made in which he could recline, and one day he asked his attendants to open the window and move him so that he could look out and see his last resting-place. The towers of St. Denis [1] were plainly visible from the new château of St. Germain, now demolished. Little could be known of what suspicions or remorses were passing in the dark labyrinth of his mind, but it is certain that he had no fear of death.

At his wish the baptism of the Dauphin was celebrated on 22 April, 1643, in the old chapel of the château.

" M. le Dauphin looked as beautiful and as innocent as an angel, kneeling with folded hands, his eyes wide

[1] This view of St. Denis annoyed Louis XIV so much that he never liked St. Germain. The prospect of the royal tombs formed one of his chief reasons for building Versailles.

open, but showing a shyness and modesty surprising for a child of his tender years."

After the ceremony the little boy, wearing an overcoat of cloth of silver, was brought in with his brother to the sick-room to see the King. Nearly all historians repeat the story that the King asked what name had been given him in baptism, and that the child answered, "Louis XIV." "*Pas encore, mon fils, pas encore,*" said the dying man.

Two days later both the children are seen again. The King was much worse, and the Queen was sent for from the old château to the new to come at once with the little boys to receive his dying benediction. An excited crowd surrounded the palace. Inside there was a great deal of confusion. The Queen could scarcely make her way to the King's room. The duchesse de Vendôme carried the baby Philippe, crying desperately for his nurse, who had been lost in the throng. The child was taken into the King's dressing-room, and told that the King had a little gold horse to give to the Dauphin, and that Philippe would get one if he behaved better than his brother. At this dazzling prospect he ceased to cry, and soon was restored to his nurse. Louis gave the benediction; but the end had not yet come. He rallied, and again asked for music—his one solace. It was thought necessary to let the little Princes know that their father was dying. They were taken into his room as he lay in a trance-like sleep, and told that they must never forget the sight. Then the Dauphin was asked, "Would you like to be King?" "No," was the child's sensible reply. "But if your papa died?" "If my papa died, I should throw myself into the moat." Nothing was spared to the feelings of these

poor children. The governess said he had made the same reply four times.

Louis XIII died on 14 May, 1643, not surrounded to the last by his wife and children and his other relatives, for the invariable custom at the death of a King of France was that all those bound to him by blood left, not only his bedside and his room, but the castle itself. The nearness of a royal death was always proclaimed by the number of coaches that drove hurriedly away from the doors, bearing freights of those whose most sacred duty, according to other ideas, would be to remain with the dying. The origin of this heartless custom is now lost, but the rule was rigidly kept till the end of the Bourbon dynasty.

The new King, Louis XIV, was four years and eight months old.

A very handsome child, already sovereign in his instincts and his personality, he stood with his brother on the balcony at St. Germain and was greeted with acclaim by the huge crowds gathered below. Afterwards he signed his first State paper, his little fingers guided by his mother.

Next day the two children made their formal entry into Paris, the centre of an adoring populace. The Queen was dressed in black velvet, and carried the King on her knee, while Philippe slept through the affair in the arms of Madame de Lausac. An immense military cavalcade surrounded the royal coach.

The Parliament, which was summoned to endorse the Regency of Anne of Austria, and to extend her powers, met on 19 May. The little King, placed upon the throne in his violet mantle, was seized with a fit of shyness, and, turning his back on the scarlet-robed assembly, hid his face among the velvet cushions.

Then recovering himself immediately, he turned, and facing the throng made his appointed speech : " Messieurs ! I am come here to assure you of my affection. My Chancellor will inform you of my will."

The Parliament at this meeting bestowed absolute power on the Queen as Regent. The proceedings lasted a long time. The little King was nearly asleep before the end.

The first use Anne made of her authority was to offer Cardinal Mazarin the position of first minister. He became thenceforward the real ruler of France.

His policy was to maintain the despotic power of the Crown which the labours of Richelieu had firmly established. The Spanish Anne understood no other government. Now, supported by Mazarin, she grasped the sceptre of France with surprising vigour.

Together they fought out the battle against a world of prejudice. The Court swarmed with Frenchmen who desired to become the successors of Richelieu. In the face of it all, the Spanish woman, and her Italian servant, kept their firm rule over France for eighteen years.

On the advice of Mazarin the Queen ceased to hold court at the Louvre, and moved to the Palais Cardinal [1] which Richelieu had bequeathed to the Crown. All the fine furniture and pictures were transferred from the Louvre, 10 December, 1643. On Mazarin's suggestion he was accorded quarters there, and thenceforward he and the Queen must be regarded as husband and wife.

The household of the little Princes was organized on a magnificent scale. Love of pomp and ceremony, and love of war, were diligently fostered. A group of

[1] Now the Palais Royal.

boys, *enfants d'honneur*, subject to strict military discipline, were drilled by the little King every day. Up and down the long galleries of the palaces the boys marched. They cared for nothing but the army and the news of war.

"The King's amusements were all warlike," writes one of his *enfants d'honneur*: "as soon as his little hands could grasp a stick, the Queen had a large drum prepared, like that of the *Cent Suisses*, upon which he beat continually. I often made the King presents, such as small guns, swords, and little cannon made of brass, which he received most graciously."

One of the boys asked Louis to lend him his crossbow. This weapon had been made by Louis XIII, and was one of his son's chief treasures; he used it often to try to shoot sparrows in the garden of the Tuileries. He was willing to lend it, but his governess, Madame de Sénécé, interposed. "Sire, Kings make gifts, but they never lend." With a kingly air, the little boy handed his companion the bow. "Sir, I wish it was a thing of greater value; but such as it is, I give it to you."

Very early in life Louis loved to be in the saddle. The people of Paris worshipped the fair-faced child, as, in gallant array, he rode about the city. To the populace, he had been from his infancy known as *Dieudonné*.

At eight years old, he was removed from the care of Madame de Sénécé and placed under governors and tutors. Ever since his birth his mother had talked a great deal about his education. She herself never opened a book. Mazarin undertook to superintend the King's studies, and beyond making this appointment Anne took no further thought in the matter. The

boy was taught nothing. At nine the King had a severe attack of smallpox. Every woman who had beauty to preserve, and all those who had never had smallpox, fled in a body from the Palais Royal. The King's death was hourly expected, and indeed his recovery seems to have been almost miraculous, in view of the doctors' attentions. They bled His Majesty four times in twenty-four hours. The Queen, in an agony of grief and fear, attended her son herself. After the crisis he made a rapid recovery. In his first convalescence he asked to see his white English pony—a birthday present from Mazarin, who now himself led the animal to the boy's bedside, where it was received and caressed with delight.

The King's brother, Philippe, was a child of a totally different character. It seemed the policy of his mother to bring him up in all respects differently from Louis. His childish effeminate mind, love of fantastic dress, and general irresponsibility, were not only tolerated but encouraged. He was dressed in petticoats long after babyhood, brought up to play with dolls like a girl, and indulged in every kind of vanity. The details of dress and of Court ceremony formed his chief interest all through life.

A certain beauty of feature, of which he was inordinately vain, was ill-matched with a very small round body. He was always known as "Little Monsieur." Madame de Motteville tells one story about Philippe which throws light upon the curious ways in which illness was treated, when the victim happened to be a prince. The boy was seized with an attack of dysentery in the summer of 1647. He was dangerously ill. Anne of Austria, a devoted but always nervous mother, was with the child. A large

number of people, all the chief figures of the Court, were gathered in his room. With some instinct of self-preservation, the invalid begged his mother to send every one away, as he wanted to be alone with her. The Queen replied that she dared not have the room cleared, as Madame La Princesse (the second wife of Gaston d'Orléans) was there, with others who had the right to be present. In fact, the boy's happiness and health were to be sacrificed to an absurd regulation of etiquette. The advice he gave showed strong common sense in a child of seven. "*Eh! bon Dieu, Madame, moquez-vous de cela!* Are you not mistress? What is the use of your crown, if it is not to do as you like? You think nothing of sending me away, when you please,—I, who am your son: should not every one have his turn?" The Queen said to Madame de Motteville: "We must satisfy him,—but it cannot be according to his way, for I shall have to leave myself in order to take away those who are annoying him." So she left the child's room, taking with her Madame La Princesse and other unwelcome visitors.

In 1647, when Louis the King was nine years old and his brother seven, a new group of playmates came to Court. The Cardinal Mazarin meant to make use of his splendid position to help those of his blood and name. He had two sisters, Madame Mancini, who had eight children, and Madame Martinozzi, who had two daughters. Mazarin sent to Italy for two of the Mancini girls and their brother, and for the eldest Martinozzi daughter. These children arrived in Paris in September 1647, and were at once taken to the Queen, who received them with a great deal of kindness. They appeared at the Queen's afternoon Court next

day. Soon the pretty high-spirited girls became the life and soul of their circle. To Louis and his brother the coming of this new element of childhood into the Court life meant a great deal of increased fun and excitement. Later, the young King suffered much unhappiness in his hopeless passion for Marie Mancini.

In 1644, Queen Henrietta Maria of England, chased from her husband's kingdom, a broken and miserable figure, fled back to France.

The Queen Regent, with her two little boys, came in their great State coach to meet and welcome her outside Paris, and together they all drove to the Louvre, where she was installed in apartments chosen by the Queen Regent. For her country residence, she was given the old château of St. Germain. She was in dire poverty, a pensioner dependent on the charity of her relations. All France sympathized with the despairing woman, bereft of husband and children, who came back, so pitifully broken in health and fortune, to the country of her girlhood.

Two years later Henrietta Maria had the happiness of receiving from England the little baby girl who had been born to her at Exeter, a fortnight before the flight to France. The little Henriette was too small an object to interest her two first cousins, Louis and Philippe. After a few years had passed, however, she was to play a great part in the comedy and tragedy of the Court of Louis XIV.

The joint reign of Anne of Austria and Mazarin was full of great results for France. The military genius of the Great Condé had made the arms of France the most feared in all the councils of Europe. Mazarin, however, was intensely unpopular. He was forced to get money for the war, and it could only come from the

people, who were desperately poor. Anne did what Mazarin directed, and was involved in the general hatred. All hopes were fixed upon Louis. The mass of the people believed that when he attained his majority there would be some change for the better.

In Paris a pamphlet was printed and circulated which purported to be a conversation between the boy, Louis XIV, and his mother. It summed up the popular idea of the situation at the Palais Royal, in a series of questions and replies, of which the following are a sample :—

"*Ma bonne Maman*, why did you take the Regency when my father forbade it on his death-bed ?"

"*Mon fils*, to be the Mistress of all France, under your authority."

"*Ma bonne Maman*, why do you employ the Cardinal Mazarin rather than any other ?"

"*Mon fils*, because I love him, and because he does all that I wish."

"*Ma bonne Maman*, why are so many comedies played at my Palais Royal at Paris, at such great expense ?"

"*Mon fils*, it is done by the Cardinal Mazarin to please me, and to make every one believe that Italians make better actors than Frenchmen." [1]

"*Ma bonne Maman*, why is peace not made ?"

"*Mon fils*, it is because the Cardinal Mazarin does not think it wise, for he says that in peace he would not be so respected or honoured."

"*Ma bonne Maman*, tell me, who is Cardinal Mazarin, that he does as he pleases with my kingdom ?"

[1] From the year 1646 Mazarin established the Italian opera in Paris. The idea originated in Florence.

"*Mon fils*, he is your governor, the first Minister of your State; is not that enough to permit him to do as he likes with your kingdom?"

"*Ma bonne Maman*, what have you done with the five hundred millions which you have received since my father's death?"

"*Mon fils*, they have been distributed by the order of Cardinal Mazarin, who has put them aside."

"*Ma bonne Maman*, why, when you have received so much money, has no one paid the wages of my officers and soldiers for three years?"

"*Mon fils*, Cardinal Mazarin is keeping it all for a time of necessity, and to marry his nieces, like Cardinal Richelieu."

Under the Queen's *régime* the Court had put on some of the old glories, which had been almost forgotten in the sombre days of Louis XIII. The balls, fêtes, masks and comedies, of which the Palais Royal was the centre, seem rather to be revivals than the result of new ideas. Though the social life of Europe had in a hundred years moved forward to a remarkable extent, in the Court of France we see the same kind of life, the same amusements, the same occupations still in vogue. The Court was still entertained by fools and jesters and dwarfs. Louis XIV as a child had two acrobats, who would have delighted the mind of Charles IX. The ordinary comforts of life were little more understood than they had been a century earlier. It had not yet occurred to Kings that their palaces might all be furnished. Everything, even the King's bed, had to be carried from one palace to another when he moved. Guest-chambers stood empty, and must be furnished by the guest.

At meals there was sometimes a profusion of food very badly served. On other occasions there was not enough. Madame de Motteville gives a description of the way the Court ladies fared.

"According to the law of etiquette, the Queen supped in solitary state. Her supper ended, we ate what was left off the same plates. We ate without order or measure, in any way we could. Our only table-service was her wash-cloth, and the remnants of her bread." An early breakfast was served at 8.30, and dinner was sometimes as early as 10.30, though the time for this was gradually altered till a later hour. The *goûter* was an afternoon meal. A "collation" was a kind of extra meal, offered on ceremonial occasions. Three-pronged forks were invented, but did not always supplant fingers at Court.

Household finances were so badly arranged that, although vast expenditure was being incurred in all directions, the table of the little King himself was often ill supplied. He once complained that Mazarin had more little fishes on his table than he had.

The simplest rules of sanitation had not yet been learned. The dirt of the royal palaces, the sights and smells of the stairs and passages, cannot be described, and imagination refuses to picture the conditions of lesser houses. The streets of Paris were deep in poisonous mud. Personal cleanliness was almost unknown. In a highly flattering description of the Queen Regent, it is mentioned to her credit that she was *clean*. She certainly had a bathroom next her bedroom at Fontainebleau. Louis XIII had his first bath when he was seven years old. He objected to washing as an effeminate habit, "*Je ne suis pas damoiseau*," he said, and no great advance had been

made in the habits of his sons. The use of cold water was considered dangerous. Henri II, Prince de Condé, had to be told by Richelieu that he must wash himself and change his shoes before visiting the King. When he put on clean linen it caused " great talk " at Court.

The most beautiful and sumptuous dresses, both of men and women, covered neglected bodies. Dainty habits were not understood. The attendants of La Grande Mademoiselle took three days to arrange her hair for a ball at the Palais Royal. The elaborate structure would then be left so arranged for an unspecified period. Another time she neglected her hair till it was " so long and dusty " that her friends did not recognize her.

In education there was much that seems to belong to the Middle Ages rather than to the seventeenth century. Men of birth and breeding were still found proud of ignorance, like the ancient knights, who thought a man could not be a soldier if he could read and write. Half-grown boys were taken from school or their tutors, and launched in life with all a man's responsibilities. It was, of course, an age of brilliant scholars, but Mazarin himself, in charge of the King's education, did not encourage a love of learning or try to make the boy work, and at fourteen he allowed him to pass his days in hunting, dancing, acting, and making the most of the companionship of the Cardinal's nieces.

Politics were the fashion in conversation. A quaint echo is recorded in the precocious remark of a little girl to Madame de Rambouillet :

" *Or ça, ma grandmaman : parlons d'affaires d'État, à cette heure que j'ai cinq ans !* "

The War of the Fronde[1] seems to divide sharply the childhood of Louis from his later boyhood. This strange half-theatrical little revolution marked, too, the transition of the Queen Regent and Mazarin from absolute domination to a temporary consideration of the demands of Parliament and people.

The Parliament of Paris[2] had been for years demanding much-needed reforms, and from time to time offering them for the sanction of the Queen and Cardinal, who both considered the changes demanded too radical. As the Parliament showed some persistence, the Cardinal ordered the arrest of three prominent members, including Peter Broussel.

A popular explosion followed. The people flew to arms, and the barricades appeared in the streets of Paris. All the discontented nobles supported the rebellious Parliament.

Among the leaders of the rebellion was La Grande Mademoiselle herself, who saw in the Fronde her chance of playing the heroine. The adventures of this girl of twenty would fill a volume. She was in her element,—a creature full of resource and self-confidence, believing in herself, in her own conquering beauty, her unrivalled attraction for men, her position as the darling of the mob in Paris. The rebellion of the Fronde really forms nothing but a background for Mademoiselle, whose courageous and eccentric figure is thrown

[1] The name of the Fronde had its origin in a catapult used by boys, who usually aimed a stone and then ran away.

[2] The Parliament of France was nothing but a Court of Law, with no legislative power. The lawyers who composed its membership had bought their places. This body, without specified legal rights, made itself into the voice of the people, and kept alive popular resentment against unjust laws and unfair privileges at Court and elsewhere.

into relief at each succeeding turn and twist of that erratic story.

Paris veered with bewildering facility from one side to the other, but the King's position was unsafe at the Palais Royal. The populace did not wish the royal party to leave Paris, and so it happened that their departure to Rueil, the chosen shelter, was an undignified flight.

To move the royal party secretly was no easy matter : it could not be done without transporting huge vans of furniture. On 12 September, before daylight, some of these heavy waggons were loaded up with royal necessaries and took the road for Rueil. The next day, also before daylight, Louis the King was taken from his bed, dressed, brought downstairs to the courtyard, put into a coach and driven off towards Rueil. Mazarin was in attendance. To avert suspicion the boy's mother waited till the evening, when she also disappeared. At Rueil great discomfort awaited the fugitives. They had hardly the common necessaries of life. Even at ten years old it is difficult to realize the kingly Louis in such an ignominious situation.

Parliament had seized the reins of Government, but they could not hold them for long, and soon the members were calling on the Queen to return to her duties at the head of the State. Anne returned to changed conditions.

The Court had forfeited respect. All the old hereditary love of the people for their Kings was a thing of the past. There was never a moment of assured supremacy. It was almost impossible in the confusion and muddle to tell who was on the royal side.

For the second time the King with his brother fled

from his city of Paris—this time to the unfurnished palace of St. Germain. The fugitives started without any luggage on 5 January. Two small camp-beds were sent on by Mazarin. It was a strange and rather noisy party. Gaston's wife, who never thought of anything but her own health and convenience, scolded and protested,—her three infant daughters also lifted up their voices and wept. Their father Gaston whistled and sang. The courtiers, with wives and children, had joined in the flight. The last person to arrive was La Grande Mademoiselle. She was so worshipped by the people of Paris that no one would have dared interfere with her movements. To complete the general picture of misery at St. Germain, the furniture and baggage did not arrive.

It is not known how many people lay upon Mazarin's two camp-beds. It is certain they were the only ones in the palace, and that all the children slept on the floor. In the days that followed, acutely uncomfortable for the grown-up people, Louis and Philippe played happily about in the gardens, although their garments became disreputable and there were none available to afford a change. Mademoiselle alone was able to smuggle goods from Paris to the drear château, for her coach was always allowed to pass unchallenged.

The second royal desertion was deeply felt. Parliament again invited the Queen Regent to return ; she indignantly refused. Then an edict expelling Mazarin was issued, money was raised, and men collected to form an army. A deputation was sent to see the King at St. Germain, to explain to the boy what such an army meant to his people and to Paris. The chief speaker was too much moved by intense emotion to

be able to finish his speech. The little King wept passionate boyish tears. But he could do nothing to help.

The troubles of the Fronde convulsed France for four years. The war ended in the triumph of the royal power, and in such humiliation for the Parliament that all its privileges were extinguished till the great Revolution nearly a hundred and fifty years later. The King and his mother came back to Paris in 1652. Recalled from a temporary exile, Cardinal Mazarin returned in 1653, and again took up the reins of Government. Every one was delighted to see him back after four years of chaos in state affairs.

The second part of the career of Louis began with his entry into Paris. An Englishman, John Evelyn, witnessed the procession when the King opened Parliament, and has left a picturesque account in his Diary. "We saw ye whole equipage and glorious cavalcade of the young French Monarch Lewis XIV passing to Parliament when first he tooke the kingly government on him, now being in his 14th yeare, out of his minority and ye Queen Regent's pupillage. First came ye captains of the King's Aydes at the head of 50 richly liveried; next the Queen Mother's light horse, an hundred, the lieutenant being all over covered with embroiderie and ribbans, having before him 4 trumpets habited in black velvet, full of lace and casques of ye same; then the King's light horse, 200, richly habited, with 4 trumpets in blue velvet embroidered with gold, before whom rid ye Count d'Olonne cornet, whose belt was set with pearl; next went ye grand Prevost's company on foote, with ye Prevoost on horseback; after them the Swiss in black velvet toques led by 2 gallant cavalieres habited in

scarlet coloured sattin after their country fashion, which is very fantastic : he had in his cap a *pennach* of heron with a band of diamonds and about him 12 little Swisse boyes with halberds. . . . Lastly appeared the King himself on an Isabella Barb, on which a houssing *semée* with crosses of ye Order of the Holy Ghost and fleur de lys ; the King himself like a young Apollo, was in a sute so covered with rich embroidery that one could perceive nothing of the stuff under it : he went almost the whole way with his hat in hand, saluting the ladies and acclamators who had filled the windows with their beauty and the aire with ' *Vive le Roy.*" He seemed a prince of a grave yet sweete countenance."

The Parliament was summoned in the great gallery of the Louvre, and there the boy of thirteen, with a great deal of grace and courtesy, gave notice of his intention to rule his kingdom himself.

Mazarin said of the boy-King that he would set off late, but would go farther than others, and that he had in him the making of four Kings and one honest man. The Parliament hardly realized that they had to deal with a King who literally meant what he said. Two years later, the members assembled without being formally summoned in order to draw up certain remonstrances. The King was hunting at Vincennes when he heard of it. He rode straight to Paris and to the Chamber. The unexpected appearance of the boy in his hunting dress, whip in hand, was a startling interruption to their debates. He said : " Gentlemen, it is well known what evils have been produced by your meetings ; I order you to put an end to your deliberations. Mr. Speaker, I forbid you to permit these assemblies, and I forbid any of you to demand them."

Thus it was a ruler not only in name who was crowned at Reims in that same year.

One of his first decisions was to abandon the Palais Royal as his chief home, and to re-open the Louvre, which he considered a safer and more kingly abode. The ancient grandeurs and luxuries of Court life, half forgotten in the long reign of his unsociable father, were now resumed. The grim palace was filled with light and laughter, with a constant succession of balls, masks, and splendid fêtes. Masquerades and ballets were a passion in 1655. The last time Louis is seen as a child, is when he appeared at a ballet in the rôle of Apollo, surrounded by nine Muses, proclaiming himself the world's victor, triumphant over everything but love. Then a beautiful little girl appeared, carrying a lyre crowned with roses and myrtle, as the Goddess of Love and Poetry. She recited some touching verses.

"Ma race est du plus pur sang
Des dieux, et sur mes montagnes
On me voit tenir un rang
Tout autre que mes compagnes.
Mon jeune et royal aspect
Inspire avec le respect
La pitoyable tendresse,
Et c'est à moi qu'on s'adresse,
Quand on veut plaindre tout haut
Le sort des grandes personnes,
Et dire tout ce qu'il faut
Sur la chute des couronnes."

This child was Henriette, the daughter of the martyred Charles I of England. She was now eleven years old. Every one seeing the two charming cousins together spoke of the hopes of two nations in their marriage, which was much discussed at the time. But at the

moment, the young imagination of Louis was dazzled by the warmer and more vivid attractions of the Mancini sisters.

Queen Anne gave a small private dance in honour of Henriette's first formal *début* at Court. She begged Queen Henrietta Maria to come with her daughter to see Louis dance. Only the ladies of honour and a few courtiers were invited to be present. The ball was to open with the *branle*. The King, according to his usual custom of noticing no one but Mazarin's nieces, went up to Laura Mancini and asked her to dance. The Queen hurriedly put a stop to this tactless proceeding, and whispered energetically to Louis to ask his cousin Henriette instead. Henrietta Maria, noticing the Queen's perturbation, begged that the King should not be asked to make any sacrifice for her daughter, adding that Henriette had hurt her foot and could not dance. The French Queen firmly replied that if Henriette did not dance, neither should the King. In the end, they both danced, but Louis was much out of humour, and managed to say to his mother, " I do not like little girls."

Poor little Henriette's first appearance in the great world was an embittering experience.

In 1653, Cardinal Mazarin had brought to Court two other nieces, Hortense and Marie Mancini. Hortense was beautiful and still a child. Marie was a thin girl, with irregular features, very plain and sallow. Her large dark eyes expressed nothing. Louis had reached the age when a susceptible boy falls in and out of love with facility and not much suffering to himself. His fancy was constantly caught by some new face. It was with the plain sister Marie that he now fell in love, and there can be little doubt that this was the

HENRIETTA MARIA, DAUGHTER OF HENRI IV
From the painting by Van Dyck in the Pitti Gallery, Florence

most real and the purest passion he was ever to know.

There could be no thought of a Mancini marriage. Even the Cardinal's ambitions stopped short of that idea. The marriage of the King was a step in which the councils of all Europe were concerned. The prospects of a Spanish peace hung upon it, and every obstacle to the Spanish match must be swept aside. It became necessary to separate the King and Marie Mancini. The part this young girl had played in his life was to make a man of Louis. She taught him to appreciate literature and all the fine arts. She developed his intellect and his ambitions. She turned his mind to the contemplation of the large aspects of life, and inspired him with a passion for power and for glory.

Nothing in his story is so touching as the parting of this boy and girl, who truly loved each other, when she was sent far away by Mazarin. Marie's last words of farewell, tender and reproachful, seem to sum up all the sorrow and helplessness of their fate : " You weep. You are the King, and yet I leave."

Preparations for the Spanish wedding went inexorably forward. The Infanta, who was twenty-one, the same age as Louis, had all her life been told that she would either marry the King of France, or go into a nunnery. The marriage by proxy was celebrated at Fontarabia on 3 June, 1660.

Madame de Motteville was present at the wedding and has left a description of the Infanta Marie Thérèse. She was small but well made, with a white skin, fair hair, and vivacious blue eyes. Her face was long, the lips rather thick, the cheeks rather fat. If her figure had been taller and her teeth better, Madame says,

she might have been good-looking. Her dress she describes as horrible and disfiguring. The Spanish ladies, she says, did not wear anything *firm* on their bodies, and the collars were open behind. The sleeves were small and slashed. Monstrous hoops stiffened with barrel hoops were worn flattened in front and behind and bulging at the sides. The whole apparatus swayed up and down with ludicrous effect when the ladies walked. The Infanta had her hair dressed broadly with a mass of false hair completely hiding her own. Her dress was white, embroidered in talc—an unusual trimming, but the use of silver was forbidden in Spain.

At the actual marriage at St. Jean de Luz, this dress was discarded, and the girl, dressed in the French style, looked much better. Philippe, the King's brother, led her to the altar.

Philippe now bore the title of duc d'Orléans. "Little Monsieur" found it impossible to conceal his delight at his uncle Gaston's death,—not so much on account of the dignities to which he now fell heir, as that the event gave him the chance of appearing in new suits of mourning, a long trailing mantle of violet velvet giving the finishing touch to his self-satisfaction. His marriage with the Princess Henriette of England was arranged, and this beautiful and charming child of sixteen was married to the effeminate and decadent little Prince in the private chapel of the Palais Royal on 31 March, 1661.

Philippe took his wife to live at the Tuileries and at Fontainebleau, until they finally settled at St. Cloud. The Treaty of the Pyrenees, giving peace with Spain at last, in the marriage of Louis XIV with the Infanta, was the final achievement of Cardinal Mazarin. His

health had long been failing, but his undefeated spirit enabled him to the last to carry through plans he had begun. When the end was near, he shut himself up with the young King, giving him advice and direction. The boy shed tears when he realized that the controlling hand was soon to be removed. He said he did not know what to do.

The exit of the great Minister left the King alone upon the stage. All other personalities vanish into the background. The limelight is thrown full on the young figure, boyish still, but already touched with the possibility of some heroic fortitude, in all the loneliness, the pathetic isolation of a great position.

All eyes are fixed upon him. On whose shoulders is the Cardinal's mantle to descend? Into whose hands will Louis commit the rule of his realm?

CHAPTER X

CHILDREN OF THE GREAT DAYS

AFTER the death of Cardinal Mazarin, Louis XIV shut himself up alone for two hours—a short space of time in which to formulate a decision which was to prove most momentous for France. During those two hours of reflection, the vision rose before him of an existence involving strenuous endeavour, unending mental effort, and a world of courage and endurance. To accept that existence, with all its sacrifice, was his firm resolve. He was twenty-three, in full vigour of mind and body, and he possessed, not only the ambition of a ruler, but the qualities of a worker.

"I resolved not to have a first Minister, and not to permit to be filled by another the functions belonging to the King, as long as I bear the title."

The decision provoked some good-natured laughter at Court. The King was so young, so given to pleasure, so entirely innocent of the grinding pressure of State affairs. A very few days of labour would suffice to show him how impossible was the sacrifice.

As the days passed on, the laughter died down. The Great Condé and the Cardinal de Retz waited for the call that should summon one or the other to the helm

of state. The call never came. The King had really lifted the burden to his own shoulders.

" I felt immediately my spirit and courage elevated. I found myself a different individual. I discovered in myself a mind which I did not know existed, and I reproached myself for having so long ignored this joy. . . . At length it seemed to me I was really King, and born to rule. I experienced a sense of well-being difficult to express."

He confronted immense difficulties. Chief among them was his own education, which Mazarin had taken care to neglect. His ignorance appalled him. He knew that there was much that never could be remedied, but he went humbly back to the sources of learning.

As chief of the state, the young King's labours were unrelaxing. The courtiers were terribly bored. The King had always been regarded as merely a figure-head for state affairs, but as the centre of all the pleasures, excitements, and small intrigues of the Court. Now he shut himself up for hours every day with his business and his studies. Nothing had any effect upon his resolution to fit himself to reign, and to reign absolutely.

The first year of the King's married life was passed mostly at Fontainebleau. Maria Theresa enjoyed there her little hour of importance and consideration before the birth of her first child. Soon she was to become the merest shadow in the great affairs of the reign. Her sister-in-law,[1] who never attempted flattery, has left in her memoirs a biting description of the Queen :

" Our Queen was excessively ignorant, but the

[1] Charlotte Elizabeth of Bavaria, second wife of Monsieur, the King's brother, known as " Madame," born 1652, died at St. Cloud 1722. She was the mother of the Regent Philippe d'Orléans.

kindest and most virtuous woman in the world. . . . She believed everything the King told her, good or bad. Her teeth were very ugly, being black and broken—from the constant habit of taking chocolate ; she also frequently ate garlic. She was short and fat and her skin was very white. She ate frequently and for a long time, but her food was always cut in pieces so small as if they were for a singing-bird. She could not forget her country, and her manners were always remarkably Spanish. . . . She had such an affection for the King that she used to watch his eyes to do whatever might be agreeable to him ; if he only looked at her kindly, she was in good spirits for the rest of the day."

The Spanish girl was utterly unfitted by nature and education to be either a Queen or a companion for Louis. She had been taught nothing except to remain impassive on all occasions, and had no natural wit or cleverness. Stiff and formal, she could never take her part in the careless gaiety of French life. Her position as the leading spirit was usurped by the fascinating English princess Henriette, now known as "*Madame*," wife of the King's brother. Her infinite grace and charm won all hearts. The King, who had once despised her as a "little girl," now sought her company on all occasions.

After the long hours of steady labour in state affairs, Louis appreciated, in his leisure time, the society of men and women who were not too serious. He wanted wit, originality, and quickness at repartee. Lightness, humour, and grace were the gifts most valued at Court. French characteristics as they are known to-day, became more definitely marked.

Fontainebleau was the scene of a succession of brilliant entertainments, including every description of open-air

fête, designed to please and distract the King for an hour. Variety was the breath of life.

Every device must be fanciful, fantastic, or sentimental, and, above all, must bear the charm of novelty. A hundred wits set about devising new ideas in pastoral plays, moonlight gatherings in the romantic glades of Fontainebleau, quaint masks, water expeditions in gondolas, and surprising forest supper parties.

Louis was possessed of so fascinating a personality that, wherever he went, all ceremony was touched with the glamour of romance. A majestic presence was united with a magnetic attraction, and he had the delightful gift of charm and courtesy of manner. There had been no figure, at once so winning and so princely, since the days of François I.

Six Children of France[1] came to fill the royal nursery. Large families were everywhere the rule in Europe, but, even in the healthiest families, few babies survived. Life after life was sacrificed to ignorance, carelessness, and superstition, even in those nurseries where all the known resources of science were available. The death-roll in countless poorer homes,

[1] The following is a list of the children of Louis XIV and Maria Theresa :—

(1) Louis Toussaint, the first Dauphin *de France*, born 1 November 1661 ; married 7 March, 1680, Marie Anne de Bavière ; died at Meudon, 14 April, 1711, leaving three sons.

(2) Anne Elisabeth, born 18 November, 1662 ; died 30 December, 1662.

(3) Marie Anne, born 16 November, 1664 ; died 26 December, 1664.

(4) Marie Thérèse, born 2 July, 1667 ; died 1 March, 1672.

(5) Philippe, duc d'Anjou, born 5 August, 1668; died 10 July, 1671.

(6) Louis François, duc d'Anjou, born 14 June, 1672 ; died 4 November, 1672.

where even blinder prejudice and denser ignorance prevailed, has of course never found record. The picture of Court life is everywhere shadowed with the oft-recurring sorrow, the hardest to be borne of all the griefs that befall humanity, the death of little children.

Little heed was given, by chroniclers of great deeds and great quarrels, to the brief lives that flickered so unsteadily across the stage of history. There was so much to report of the children who did manage to live, and to pass on the torch to other generations; and, after all, only the parents had any real interest, or kept any living remembrance of the vanished babies. Looking back to the early married years of the great Louis XIV and his Queen, it is clear that they brought almost constant sorrow. Louis the Dauphin, the eldest of the group, was born at Fontainebleau in 1661. This was "Monseigneur," the Grand Dauphin, who, the the son of a king, was destined to be the father of a king and never to be king himself. Born on All Souls' Day, 1 November, he received from his godmother, Queen Henrietta Maria, the quaint name of Toussaint in addition to that of Louis. No child had ever been born to such a heritage of promised glory, or more lamentably fell short of its achievement. In 1662 Anne Elisabeth, the King's eldest daughter, was born at the Louvre. She lived only six weeks. Flattering Court chroniclers say that she gave promise of great beauty. The young King was profoundly moved at the death of this baby. All the royal family were at the death-bed. The Queen Mother expressed a wish that she herself could have been taken instead of the baby, and begged with tears that the heart should be given to her for her convent of Val-de-Grace. The next day she herself carried the heart there, and

giving it to the Abbess, said, " My Mother, I bring you a heart to which my own will soon be joined."

The death of so small a child was, however, of little account. It would be thought best to forget it as quickly as possible. Only a week's retirement was allowed, and then Court festivities recommenced. Two years passed, and then came another little daughter, Marie Anne. The Court chroniclers describe her as " a little hairy swarthy girl " and " a monstrous apparition," so perhaps it was as well that she lived only ten days. Three years after, in 1667, Marie Thérèse was born at St. Germain, the " *Petite Madame* " who lived five years. Her aunt, Charlotte Elizabeth of Bavaria, in her historical fragments, left a short description of this poor child. " A cautery had drawn, her mouth all on one side, so that it was almost entirely in her left cheek. For this reason talking was very painful to her, and she said very little. Just when she was about to die, her mouth returned to its proper place and she did not seem at all ugly. I was present at her death ; she did not say a word to her father. . . . The King, who had a good heart and was very fond of his children, wept excessively. . . . The Queen was not present. . . . They would not let her come. The people cannot be persuaded that the child is not still alive, and say that it is in a convent at Moret. It is, however, quite certain that the ugly child is dead ; for all the Court saw it die."

Another son of France, Philippe, duc d'Anjou, was born at St. Germain in 1668, to the joy of the nation. From the first he was very delicate. Remedy was sought in a perpetual change of nurses, and the doctors used one of their fashionable cures in applying a cautery to the poor child, who seems always to have

been in a decline. When the King saw that there was no hope for the life of his second son, he decided on his immediate baptism and asked La Grande Mademoiselle to stand godmother. Mademoiselle's own life had always been so stormy and unhappy that she was afraid of bringing the baby bad luck, and asked the King to appoint some one else, who would not feel the child's loss so much. Soon after the baptism the baby died, to the extreme grief of both the King and the Queen.

The third son, Louis François, was born in 1672 and lived only five months. Thus in fifteen months the King lost three of his children. Mourning was not worn for children under seven, and signs of grief would be considered a lamentable weakness if continued beyond a few days. Only one Child of France was left, Louis Toussaint, the *Grand Dauphin*. Remembering his own neglected education, Louis XIV spared no pains in providing his son with the best of tutors and giving him all means of cultivating and developing his mind as a boy. Never were golden opportunities more completely thrown away. The mind of Monseigneur revelled in ignorance; he had not the smallest interest in knowledge of any kind, and after school days were past never opened a book. In every particular of mind and body, he was exactly the opposite of his father. He had none of his high sense of public duty, none of his industry, his imagination, or his discernment. He was fat and idle, rather tall, with an expressionless face, and feet so small that he never walked properly, but shuffled as if afraid of falling. One manly taste he shared with his father: both were passionately fond of the chase. While the favourite sports of the King were wild boar hunting

and stag-hunting, Monseigneur preferred the more useful pursuit of wolf-hunting. He would rise at five in the morning and be in the saddle for ten hours. Followed by twenty-five of his friends, and dressed in a blue coat trimmed with gold and silver, a red waistcoat, a hat with a white plume, blue knee-breeches, and top-boots and gold-fringed gloves, he ran through a great many dangers and fatigues He is said to have ultimately destroyed every wolf in the woods round Versailles.

The Queen Mother, Anne of Austria, died at Fontainebleau in 1666.

Three years later, in September 1669, the Queen of England, *La Reine Malheureuse*, whom she had so constantly and kindly befriended, died also. She was at her summer palace of Colombes near Paris. Her death was sudden. She was carried to St. Denis, and there laid beside her father, Henri IV. In a few months the vault was opened again to receive yet another of her race.

The Palace of St. Cloud, with its exquisite gardens and pleasure grounds and its great memories, was the home of her daughter Henriette and her family.[1]

[1] The children of Monsieur the King's brother were as follows :—
By his first wife, Henriette of England—
(1) Maria Louisa, born 1662 ; married, 1679, Charles II of Spain ; died 1689.
(2) Duc de Valois, born 1664 ; died 1666.
(3) N. de France, born 1665 and died the same day.
(4) Anna Maria, born 1669 ; married, 1684, Victor Amadeus of Savoie ; died 1728.
By his second wife, Charlotte Elizabeth of Bavaria—
(1) Alexandre Louis, born 1673 ; died 1676.
(2) Philippe (the Regent), born 1674 ; married the King's daughter, Mlle de Blois, 1692 ; died 1723.
(3) Elisabeth Charlotte, born 1676 ; married the duc de Lorraine, 1698 ; died 1744.

The King, who never ceased to be much attached to Henriette, was constantly there with his Court, and no doubt Monseigneur, and perhaps Petite Madame too, would be taken there to play with the little girl cousins. There tragedy befell, when on 30 June 1670 all the brilliance and pleasure was thrown suddenly into darkness by the death of the beautiful Henriette, a death that then brought with it the gravest suspicion of poison, but which in the light of modern science can be pronounced to have been really natural.

The King was profoundly affected. He seemed always in the midst of tragedy in his private life.

His career as head of the State was full of triumph. The Spanish marriage had not resulted in a lasting peace with Spain. When Philip IV of Spain died, in 1665, Louis set up a claim through his wife upon certain Spanish dominions; these claims were naturally resisted and hostilities flamed afresh.

While immense sums were being spent on foreign wars, the King was building at home. His imagination was always on a magnificent scale, and his dreams took a sumptuous shape.

As a boy of thirteen, Louis had once paid a visit to a hunting lodge built by his father in the woods not far from Paris. He found a small château called Versailles, built, in the fashion of 1625, on three sides of a court-yard. There was a moat round it and stone balustrades. The boy liked the place. He often went to Versailles to hunt. In 1662 he began to give magnificent entertainments in the park, which he had extended and improved. The desire to build began to make itself strongly felt, and he conceived the idea of enlarging the château. The immense buildings at Versailles were begun, and carried on for over forty years.

The expense was enormous. A perfect army of skilled workmen, marble-cutters, artificers in metal, painters, sculptors, and decorators were constantly occupied. Besides these, twenty-two thousand labourers and six thousand horses were all at work on the palace or the park, when the King came to live there. Finally, in May 1682, he took possession. From thenceforth Versailles became the centre of Court life, the scene of unparalleled splendours. In the midst of the gilt and marble magnificence, the cold was bitter. Draughts swept unceasingly through the superb galleries. There was no comfort anywhere.

In grandeur, in its wealth of artistic detail, in the sumptuous lodging it afforded to the vast throng of the courtiers, Louis must have felt that Versailles fulfilled its purpose, as a fitting setting for the home life of the greatest monarch in the world. Two hundred years of poignant history and of the softening of time, have thrown a glamour over the imposing mass of building. But at the time of its completion the great dwelling must have seemed bleak, cold, and new to a court accustomed to the more intimate charm of Fontainebleau sheltered in its enchanting woods, or to St. Germain, with its hoary memories, commanding the river Seine, or even to the dark Louvre, full of secrets, set in the midst of the full tide of a nation's central life flowing closely round its ancient walls. Louis never cared for Paris. He decreed that all royal life should centre at Versailles. There too were gathered all the men of the day most distinguished in art and letters. Louis was a magnificent patron and friend to genius, wherever he found it.

The people of France, carried to enthusiasm by the

success of their arms abroad and the magnificence of their King at home, did not grudge Louis the glory, or count the cost of either one or the other The rising sun was his device ; his motto, *Nec pluribus impur*. As a hero and a demigod he was hailed with worship and acclamation on his way through his cities to join the army, or to return after victory to his Court. Extraordinary demonstrations marked these events. It was the custom of the King to kiss every woman who appeared at Court on these occasions. He was obliged to renounce the habit on account of the large number of women who came from Paris to share in this ceremony.

When the King embarked on his campaigns, the ladies of his family and household went with him and followed the flag through a series of real discomforts and privations. It is extraordinary how these delicate women, used to soft living and totally untrained to bodily fatigue, endured the hardships of such travel. La Grande Mademoiselle had set the example of warlike spirit in women. Louis XIV expected the Queen and her ladies to accept without question a mode of life that excluded not only all luxury but the common decencies of daily life. He hated grumbling or peevishness, and every one had to pretend to enjoy the adventure.

To the little Queen, Maria Theresa, life was rather a dreary affair. She loved Louis, and was obliged to witness without protest the centreing of all his interests and affections on other women. She had been married only a short time when she was supplanted by Louise de la Vallière.

Of all the women of her day, La Vallière was the most appealing. She was soft, loving, and humble. " There

was an inexpressible charm in her countenance," writes Charlotte Elizabeth, "her figure was elegant, but not striking, her whole appearance was unassuming. She was slightly lame and not beautiful." Her pale star was soon eclipsed before the blinding attractions of Madame de Montespan. "Her figure was ugly and clumsy," writes the candid Madame, describing Montespan, "but her eyes bespoke great intelligence, though they were somewhat too bright; her mouth was very pretty, and her smile uncommonly agreeable. Her complexion was fairer than La Vallière's, her look was more bold, and her general appearance denoted her intriguing temper. She had very beautiful light hair, fine arms, and pretty hands, which La Vallière had not; but the latter was always very neat, and Montespan was very dirty. She was very amusing in conversation."

The triumphant Montespan was in her turn also to see herself supplanted. Her children's governess was of so unpretentious a personality that she had never paid her the compliment of suspecting for a moment that she could ever contest her throne. Madame Scarron was the young widow of a middle-aged cripple and burlesque poet, Paul Scarron, whom she had married when she was seventeen. He died after eight years, leaving her in great poverty.

"She is not only beautiful," writes one who knew her well, "and of a kind of beauty which is always pleasing; but she is also sweet-tempered, discreet, and of a grateful disposition, trustworthy, modest, and very intelligent, and she makes use of these gifts to amuse others and to win their sympathy." It is easily to be understood that Madame de Montespan, was delighted to find such a woman as this to take

charge of her children. The post was a difficult one to fill, for the existence of the Montespan children was at first supposed to be a secret from the world. The Marquise did not care for her own children. Madame Scarron, whose nature was thoroughly motherly, loved them extremely, doting indeed far too much on the oldest boy, the duc de Maine. Her care for them was unremitting. The King often talked with her when he went to see the children. When to his intense sorrow some of the little ones died, he found a wealth of sympathy, not in the real mother, but in the governess, who endured the same suffering. At all times he saw in her a woman of discretion, good temper, and steady cheerfulness. She had all the qualities lacking in Madame de Montespan, who, herself uncomfortably conscious of her own shortcomings, became suspicious and jealous at last. The King treated Madame Scarron with unfailing respect. In reward for her devoted services to his children, he purchased for her, in 1674, the estate of Maintenon near Chartres, about ten miles from Versailles. Thenceforward she was known as Madame de Maintenon.

After ten years of association with Madame de Montespan, the tie was brought to an end. The King's thoughts became more and more absorbed by the grave attractions of the older woman.

Then, in 1683, the Queen died, and the whole situation changed. A few months after the Queen's death, Louis and Madame de Maintenon were privately married. The bride was forty-eight, the King three years younger. The whole tone of Court life and manners underwent a complete and much resented change. A storm of anger and contemptuous criticism

was levelled at the new wife. She met everything with calm dignity. She had nothing to fear, and easily held her empire in the King's estimation for thirty years.

With the King's marriage to Madame de Maintenon, the third epoch of the reign began. The great days were over, with all the splendours of the Court, the creative outburst of art and literature, the military genius, the superb statesmanship. The King ceased to govern for himself. He listened to Madame de Maintenon, who was devoted to the Church, and to his confessor, the Père Tellier. With the best intentions in the world, these counsellors gave Louis the worst advice. In October 1685, at Fontainebleau, he signed the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. To this day, France suffers from the blow dealt to her greatness and prosperity. He had put back the hands of the clock a hundred years. A Continental war followed. Louis encountered a check fatal to his prestige. He learnt to endure defeat. But nothing mattered as long as Madame de Maintenon and his confessor praised him. He lived only for their approval.

CHAPTER XI

CHILDREN OF VERSAILLES

LEAST romantic of all the personalities at Court was that of the young Monseigneur, the Dauphin. The boy was eighteen when Louis XIV decided that he must be married. He was at the moment the greatest match in Europe. The lady finally selected by Louis was Marie Anne Christine Victoire of Bavaria.[1] The King and Queen went to meet her at Chatou. The bride was nineteen. La Grande Mademoiselle tells us that she was dressed in blue brocade with white ribbons in her hair, and also that she had black hair and was red from the cold. She was hideous to look upon. The King had consulted Monseigneur as to whether he objected to marry so plain a bride. He answered that he only sought sense and intelligence. Both were found in

[1] The children of the Grand Dauphin and Marie Anne of Bavaria were as follows :—

(1) Louis, duc de Bourgogne, born 6 August, 1682. After the death of his father in 1711 he was known as the Second Dauphin. Married, 6 December, 1697, Marie Adelaide de Savoie. He died six days after his wife, 18 February, 1712.

(2) Philippe, duc d'Anjou, born 19 December, 1683. King of Spain 1700. Married, first, Marie Louise Gabrielle de Savoie; second, Elisabeth Farnese. Died in 1746.

(3) Charles, duc de Berry, born 31 August, 1686; married, 6 July, 1710, Marie Louise Elisabeth, daughter of the duc d'Orléans. Died 4 May, 1714.

the cultivated little Dauphine, but she proved a melancholy companion, given to long spells of depression, and to endless solicitude for her own health. The life at Versailles did not dazzle her. She had an immense pride in her own race and the glory of the little kingdom she had left.

In one sense Marie Anne fulfilled her duty. She gave the Dauphin children. Her first son, Louis, duc de Bourgogne, was born 6 August, 1682. The event happened at Versailles. It was the first royal birth at the new palace. The King's anxiety was intense. No one could have been more tender in his care for the Dauphine. The whole Court and the whole country exulted in a tumult of enthusiasm in this birth, which gave an heir to France in the third generation.

An enormous crowd assembled in and outside the palace in breathless expectancy. When the King appeared holding the baby in his arms, public enthusiasm rose to inconvenient heights. The mob tore up the parquetry flooring to make a bonfire, seizing upon furniture and anything inflammable they could find. The King was unmoved. " We can get new parquets," he said. The mass of people pressed so closely round him, that he stood for a moment in real danger of suffocation.

In the following year, 19 December, 1683, came another child, Philippe, duc d'Anjou. It had been a year of mourning at Court, for the King had lost his wife, Queen Maria Theresa, and two of his sons, the comte de Vermandois,[1] who was sixteen, and the comte de Vexin,[2] who was ten years old. The small grandson came in the midst of the mourning.

[1] The son of Louise de la Vallière.
[2] The second son of Madame de Montespan.

A third son, Charles, duc de Berry, was born to Monseigneur and his wife on 31 August, 1686, the last of the family.

The three little boys, the first Children of France to enliven the vast galleries and splendid gardens of Versailles, brought a great deal of hope and happiness to the King, who had seen so many of his children playing in the halls and gardens—sons and daughters who could not claim the name of Bourbon, or carry on the royal tradition. The three sons of Monseigneur, little regarded by their father, who never treated them as if they were his own, were a gracious sign of the permanence of the royal race in the sight of their grandfather the King. He watched over their bringing-up, delighted in their spirit and boyish ways, and loved them with the love his great heart always yielded to children of his blood and his name.

The boys' governess was the Maréchale de la Motte. According to the royal custom which had held good for so many generations, each child, as he reached the age of seven, was removed from the care of women and transferred to that of governors and tutors. In the case of the eldest boy, these were most carefuly chosen by the King. Monsieur de Beauvillier was his governor, but his tutor and chief companion was the great Fénelon.[1]

The boy was delicate and spoiled. Nurses and governess pronounced him unmanageable. He could not bear contradiction. He was proud with the pride that easily becomes ignoble, rebellious in his attitude

[1] François de Salignac de la Mothe Fénelon, born 6 August, 1651, became a priest in 1675 and Archbishop of Cambrai in 1675. He died 7 January, 1715. He was a great educational author and a noted mystic in theology.

to authority, loving pleasure, and determined to have his own way. Beneath all these failings, the foundations of a fine character stood secure. He was absolutely truthful and sincere. Moreover, he had intellect and a conscience.

Fénelon did marvels with this boy. He recognized from the first that he had to deal with fine material, that there were qualities in the little Louis that fitted him to be a king. Fénelon had his own ideas about kingship, and they were not those of Louis XIV, with his magnificent claim, "*L'État, c'est moi.*" The great scholar and mystic bent his mind and his faculties to the task, which he knew to be beautiful and sacred, of inspiring the child, who would some day be king, with the resolve to live for the happiness of his people.

The character of Louis was transformed; he learned the divine lesson of the beauty of restraint and self-control. Once, when the boy was very young, he rebelled against the authority of Fénelon, with an outburst of childish arrogance. "I know who I am," he said, "and I know who you are." Fénelon did not reply till the next morning, and then quietly explained that his pupil was wrong in supposing himself superior, except in birth, which was not a matter to be considered at the moment, and said they must both go at once to the King and ask him to choose another tutor. Louis cried and protested. Fénelon was firm. In the end, Madame de Maintenon, always soft-hearted, and anxious to grant indulgence to any child, interposed and made peace.

More often the boy showed himself wholly loving and submissive. "I leave outside the door the duc de Bourgogne," he said, when he was nine years old, "and with you I am nothing more than little Louis."

For love of Fénelon he subdued his passionate pride and self-will, and Fénelon pays him the high tribute of saying, " I have never seen anyone whom I had less fear of displeasing in telling him hard truths about himself."

The little Prince wrote simple and charming letters showing very clearly the relationship between the high, spiritual mind of the man which, out of its depths of sympathy, could appreciate the small tender interests of his pupil, and the dawning character of the boy.

" My cold is much better," writes the little Louis from Fontainebleau on 23 October 1696, " even quite done with ; I have been going out the last two days. We have had horrid weather till then, almost constant rain. We return to Versailles the day after to-morrow, and I shall go back to my usual ways, interrupted a little by this illness When I left Versailles the canary had ceased to moult, and begun to sing again. I have finished the History of Francis I, and am in the middle of the Fourth Book of Tacitus. I hope to finish in three weeks. I desire to see you again very soon, and in good health. Till then, I beseech you be well assured of my love for you. Do not forget to write to me now and then ; your letters always give me pleasure."

Fénelon gave five years of his life to the training of all three little brothers, though the eldest boy was more especially his charge.

" They lived plainly," writes a contemporary, " being only allowed dry bread in the morning but as much as they liked of the simple food served them at dinner and at supper. They kept Lent more or less according to their age, Monseigneur de Bourgogne

having begun to observe it scrupulously. As for their other rules, no citizen of Paris would risk such a system. They wear nothing on their heads even when riding or when it rains. They go out daily, whatever may be the weather, and take violent exercise, sometimes, when at Fontainebleau, remaining out the whole day. . . . They rise at 7.45 and go to Mass, then to the levee of the Dauphin for a moment, then to the King, remaining till 9.30. From 10 to 12 they study. They then dine together, and amuse themselves in their own apartments till 2.45. In summer they study till 5 ; in winter they spend the same time out of doors. At 8 they sup, and afterwards play at indoor games till about 9.

" They go out together, and three or four young lords with them ; but they are alone the rest of the day. They are forbidden to whisper to each other, but must always speak out to every one. On Sundays and *fête* days their lessons are religious . . . M. de Fénelon has a horror of pedantry, and dwells chiefly on the study of politics, history, and military tactics. The object is to teach them everything that is beautiful and curious and useful in all arts and sciences, but nothing to be specialized, a definite pursuit being regarded as unworthy and ridiculous in a prince."

The young duc de Bourgogne lost Fénelon when he was thirteen. The order of the King, who had never liked Fénelon, definitely separated the two. On a plea of his dangerous doctrines, he was exiled from Court.[1] For four years no correspondence was allowed. Then, as if the limits of submission were reached,

[1] The King was deeply prejudiced against anything new, and he liked to display his orthodoxy. Rome had condemned the doctrines of Fénelon, who died unpardoned at Cambrai early in 1715.

Louis wrote, pouring out the sorrows and difficulties of his young heart. Fénelon's reply is one of the finest achievements of his life, in its sober eloquence and restraint of all emotion, reminding the boy that their tie was not in personal, but in spiritual relationship.

"My heaviest cross is in not seeing you; but I am with you unceasingly before God, in a presence more intimate than that of the senses. . . . I would give a thousand lives like a drop of water, to see you such as God desires you to be."

The love of this child was the master emotion of his life. It was not at any time a blind absorption, and flattery was impossible to the austere heights his love had attained. In after years the pair met at rare intervals, and these were shining days for them both. But to the end of the life of Louis, Fénelon continued to write to him long letters of guidance, full of ardour, plain-spoken, candid—the supreme effort of his intellect and heart, which had from the first only desired to spend itself in lifting the young soul into the presence of God.

Louis emerged from childhood with a character definitely noble. Not one of all the Bourbon race showed such fine impulses or such high ideals. He was great enough in his conception of duty to have made the necessary sacrifices to save the monarchy.

As if an ironic Fate controlled the destinies of France, it was decreed that this spirit, so finely touched to fine issues, and rich in all instincts of truth and justice, should never achieve the redemption of his dynasty. Instead of reigning, he was to die. Instead of leaving to his race some strain of character that should carry on his noble tradition, he was to be the father of Louis XV.

The next brother, Philippe, was silent and rather apathetic. Madame, in giving a description of the boys, says both the elder ones were very hunchbacked, and that this was caused by their being made to carry iron crosses for the purpose of keeping them upright. There is probably a good deal of exaggeration in the picture. Madame's portraits are always unflattering, and not always borne out by the descriptions of other people. According to her view, the duc de Bourgogne, pronounced by others a handsome boy, dark-eyed with regular features, had " a very ill-looking mouth, a sickly appearance, small stature, and a hump at his back," and Philippe, duc d'Anjou, was ill-made. She allows him, however, some personal attraction. He was taller than his brothers and had fair hair and dark eyes, a clear red and white complexion and good features. Charles, duc de Berry, was altogether different in disposition. He was a good-looking, boisterous child, gay, frank, and popular. As he grew up, he could only talk of hunting and shooting, though as a boy he was noted for his sharp replies. He never learned much beyond reading and writing, and persuaded himself that he was a fool, incapable of mental effort. The boy's mother, the melancholy little Dauphine, died in 1690, when Berry was four. Their father, the Dauphin, never paid any attention to his children.

The boys were devoted to each other. They are seen together in one little scene, in 1698, when the duc de Bourgogne was fourteen and his brothers, Philippe and Charles, thirteen and ten years old. The bride of the eldest, Marie Adelaide de Savoie, was about to arrive in France. The boys were deeply interested. Little Charles asked Philippe if he would

not like to be married too, and whether he would make his wife happy. To both questions Philippe answered, "Yes." "But what should you do if she did not like you to go hunting?" "I should not go," said the chivalrous Philippe. Charles then remarked, "I would try to make my wife happy, but in things that concerned only myself, I would be master."

The marriage of the King's grandson and heir was the subject of much anxious thought. The princess ultimately chosen, Marie Adelaide de Savoie, was the grand-daughter of Henriette of England, Monsieur's first wife, and was therefore a grand-niece of Louis XIV. She was born 6 December 1685.

The King went to Montargis to meet the bridal party. His letter to Madame de Maintenon gives the best description of the little bride.

"She has the best grace and the prettiest figure I have ever seen; dressed like a picture and her hair done the same; eyes very bright and very beautiful, and lashes black and admirable; complexion very even, white and red, all one could wish; the finest blonde hair that was ever seen and a great mass of it. She is thin, which is natural to her age, her mouth is rosy, the lips full, the teeth white, long, and irregular, her hands well made, but the colour of her age. She speaks little, as far as I have heard, is not embarrassed when looked at, like one who has seen the world. She curtsies badly with a somewhat Italian air. . . . I am entirely satisfied . . . she is short rather than tall for her age. . . . She says little, but that little is to the point in reply to questions asked her. . . . Her air is noble and her manners polished and agreeable. . . . I forgot to say that I

have seen her play at spilikins in a charming manner."

The bridegroom met her at Nemours, and the whole party returned to Fontainebleau.

The two children were scarcely ever allowed to see each other. They had no chance of becoming playmates and friends. They met once a fortnight, and Anjou and Berry might only visit their sister-in-law once a month.

The marriage was celebrated at Versailles in December 1697. The young Louis wore a black velvet coat embroidered with gold and an embroidered mantle of cloth of silver. He was covered with lace and wore ribbons in his shoes and a plumed hat. Marie Adelaide's dress was cloth of silver, and her jewels were rubies and pearls.

For two years longer, they lived as children, continuing their education and only meeting occasionally. In 1699, when Marie Adelaide was fourteen, they began life together and had special apartments assigned to them both at Fontainebleau and Versailles.

The coming of Marie Adelaide is interesting for one special reason. Nothing that had happened for years made such a difference to the King, to Madame de Maintenon, and to the whole Court. An enchanting child, gay, irresponsible, fearless, she was utterly unlike any other Dauphine. She did not creep upon the scene, a bewildered stranger, confused and apprehensive, to pass into a nonentity as soon as the marriage festivities were over. Marie Adelaide arrived like a little whirlwind, creating a stir and storm whenever she appeared. From the moment the King saw her, he fell a victim to her fascinating personality. But she was not satisfied with a single conquest.

She must win all hearts, and be first in the good graces of great and small alike.

The Court, once brilliant, reckless, and profligate, had changed utterly in character since Madame de Maintenon had assumed the chief control. The royal surroundings were now grave, well-regulated, sober, and extremely dull. Marie Adelaide hated dullness with all her childish soul. She never rested till some at least of the old glories were restored. Madame de Maintenon, regretting the child's neglected education, for she could hardly read and write, used to take her to St. Cyr, the school she herself had founded for girls of gentle birth. Marie Adelaide was interested at first, but she was too young to realize the depths of her own ignorance. She soon tired of lessons, and the King would not have her troubled. To amuse her he gave her a menagerie at Versailles, and a little carriage of her own that she might follow him to the hunt.

"The King," says a letter of the day, "wishes that Madame la duchesse de Bourgogne should do as she likes from morning until night. . . . There are now only journeys to Marly, to Meudon, going to and fro to Paris for operas, balls, and masquerades."

Certainly the little duchesse had an insatiable appetite for pleasure, coupled with sound health and unflagging energy. Every one round her was worn out, but she never knew what fatigue meant. As time went on she acquired a taste for gambling. Sometimes it was necessary to scold her. When this duty was thrust upon the King, Marie Adelaide showed herself in her most enchanting mood—tender, sorrowful, contrite, a small depressed, helpless creature, humbly and tearfully waiting for pardon. The King always

failed to keep up the required measure of stern reproof, and ended by comforting and coaxing her into happiness and high spirits again.

It may be imagined how easily this charming child held empire over the heart of her husband, Louis de France. Grave, studious, chivalrous, his deeper nature enfolded hers, with all her delicious follies, her sweet wilfulness, her loving simplicity, and he never ceased to find all his happiness in calling the radiant creature his own. These must have been the best years of his short life, when he was still a boy with his child-wife, and his brothers, loyally devoted, were his close comrades.

Boyhood, and the brothers' daily life together, came to an end in 1700. Charles II of Spain made a will in October 1700, bequeathing the crown of Spain to Philippe, duc d'Anjou. Louis XIV accepted the crown on behalf of his grandson. Philippe was silent and reserved as ever when he knew of the prospect. All the Court assembled to do him homage and to meet the Spanish Ambassadors. The newly chosen King did not even understand Spanish. Louis XIV was, as usual, the central figure of the whole ceremony. Addressing the assembly, he said, " Gentlemen, here is the King of Spain. His birth has called him to that crown. The nation has desired him, and asked him from me, and I have granted their wish with pleasure. This is the will of Heaven." Then he said to Philippe, " Be a good Spaniard ; that is now your first duty ; but do not forget that you were born a Frenchman, and preserve the alliance between the two nations. That is the way to render them happy and to preserve the peace of Europe." The Spanish Ambassador then made the historic remark about the Pyrenees existing no longer—an announcement soon to be discounted.

After all the solemnities, it is good to know that the new King spent his evening in the apartments of Madame de Maintenon, romping with his two brothers. In December 1700, Philip V, King of Spain, rode away from Versailles with the royal family. Large crowds gathered all the way to Sceaux, where he finally parted with his relations. This was the cause of a depressing scene. The three boys felt the separation bitterly. Madame has left a description of the event. "Everybody was in tears, the Dauphin was terribly touched, and embraced his son with such tenderness that I was afraid they would die of grief. The King . . . cried so bitterly that he was unable to speak. '*Tant pis,*' said the King of Spain, when they told him that everything was ready. Nothing was seen but pocket-handkerchiefs and red eyes: men and women sobbed aloud."

Before long this kingly election had the effect of throwing Europe into the maze of the war of the Spanish Succession, which was to prove disastrous to France, and was to bring down Le Grand Monarque from his imperial heights.

France was not in a position to undertake another great war. The country was desperately poor, the peasantry were starving, trade was losing ground, and there was no great statesman, or great general, to seize the helm of state. But Louis desired to recover the glory of the great days. So the desperate European struggle began against the encroachments of French power, and for the rest of the reign war never ceased. The battles in Flanders made Marlborough great, and immensely reduced the prestige of France. Disaster followed disaster.

Life at Versailles remained the same, remote, with-

drawn from the common interests, a little austere, filled with laborious and planned ceremonial. All force, all vital impulse, was dying gradually in the artificial atmosphere. The only real living creative forces at Court were those that emanated from the eager pair, still hardly more than children, Louis de France and his wife Marie Adelaide.

Their married life was an extremely happy one. The devotion of Louis to his wife was an annoyance in surroundings where such a thing as faithful love was a reproach or a jest. It was considered a weakness, even by Fénelon, who reproached his beloved "*Petit Prince*" for his absorption in domestic ties. But nothing could check the full tide of his passion. Moreover, as life's responsibilities crowded upon him, he leaned on Marie Adelaide for guidance, preferred her advice, and yielded to her influence.

When the duc went away to the wars, he wrote his wife a series of letters almost childish in their expression of devotion. He was twenty-one when he sent, from the camp at Salmbach, a missive stained with his own blood, with a drawing in blood of two burning hearts, bearing the legend "*Louis. Adelaide.*"

The first child[1] of the duc and duchesse de Bourgogne was born 25 June 1704. Louis XIV was sixty-six when he held in his arms his first royal great-grandchild, heir to his crown and his great kingdom.

[1] The following were the children of the duc and duchesse de Bourgogne :—

(1) Louis, duc de Bretagne, born 25 June, 1704; died 13 April, 1705.

(2) Louis, duc de Bretagne, born 8 January, 1707; died 8 March 1712.

(3) Louis XV of France, born 15 February, 1710; died 10 May, 1774.

A great *fête* was held at Marly, and the King loaded Marie Adelaide with splendid gifts. The people of Paris indulged in scenes of frantic enthusiasm. A great deal of money was spent that was badly needed for the war, which was proceeding ingloriously for France.

In the isolation of Versailles, the King could not guess the temper of the people. All went on at Court as if the honour of France was not in the balance. The baby was a subject of paramount importance. The boy lived only nine months. He never received the public ceremonial of baptism, and lived and died without a name, being known simply as the duc de Bretagne. He died 13 April 1705, to the despair of the young parents.

Another boy was born 8 January 1707 and was christened Louis. No expensive rejoicings were held. The exchequer was nearly empty. A letter written by the young mother when he was two months old, shows how pathetically, in those days of infant mortality, even love must be restrained.

" I should not be surprised if, a few months hence, he became pretty. I don't know whether it is that I am beginning to grow blind as far as he is concerned and deceive myself with hope. But I believe that I shall never be blind about my children, and that the love I have for them will make me see their defects and so try in good season to correct them. I go to see my son very seldom, in order that I should not grow too attached to him ; also that I may note the changes in him. He is not old enough to play with as yet, and as long as I know he is in good health, I am satisfied."

Marie Adelaide was not destined to suffer the loss of this boy. He lived five years, outlived her for three

weeks, and was the last victim of the tragic harvest of death at Versailles in 1712.

The third child of France was born 14 May, 1710. He also bore the name of Louis. The youngest of the family, he was fated to succeed to the throne of France as Louis XV.

History shows no picture of the life of the two little sons of France in their nursery or school days. Contemporary records are full of the thunder of the great wars, or of the Court intrigues, and the more disastrous military quarrels that never ceased to hold the chief place in the drama.

Marie Adelaide fulfilled a difficult duty both as wife and mother, but imagination gives her a place, not in these relationships, but always at the side of Louis XIV and Madame de Maintenon. Her claim to immortal remembrance lies in the fact that she brought a flood of love and tender sympathy to inspire the last sad years of a great king who had seen affection and glory recede from him like a tide. She made life a little easier for a patient and dutiful woman, very tired and old, who turned to the shelter of her love, in the closing years of a life of strenuous endeavour. With all her thoughtlessness, her wayward charm, her generous sympathies, the power of her spirit to rise nobly in the endurance of bitter sorrows, the figure of Marie Adelaide remains one of the most appealing in history.

As in childhood and youth, and in the magnificence of his manhood, Louis XIV in old age fills the picture and eclipses all others.

Once, strong in mind and body, he had wielded an immense power. He had held the issues of life and death, of war and peace. He had controlled not only

the destinies of nations, but, with equal tenacity, the innermost details of life in those around him. Nothing had been too great, and nothing too small to be bent to submission by the master hand and brain. Sorrows had always lain thickly about his path, and the story of his private life is one of unending bereavement. All friends of his own generation had dropped away long ago, and long ago too he had lost the faces of his little children. His later years brought loss upon loss. Whole groups of sons, daughters, and grandchildren went into the darkness. Women who had loved him, men who had fought for him, genius which had burned to enrich his reign—he saw them all go. These were personal griefs to be endured. But the glory of France, his chief aim and his supreme reward, had maintained its steady fire. Now the shadows had crept there too; the flame was dying down. Victory no longer attended his arms.

No one could dispel the cloud of depression that hung over the Court at Versailles and Marly. Madame de Maintenon for years passed her time in struggling against the dead level of dullness, a weight which seemed to crush all vital force in the King. He had the Bourbon faculty for being bored. But now she was old herself, and had for so many years borne the burden of guiding Louis in safe paths, and at the same time keeping him amused and occupied, that a great fatigue overpowered her. Louis would do nothing without her, and with him she must never be an old lady, but always a power and an influence, in mind and body alert and responsive. She scarcely ever had an hour to herself.

Louis survived every one of his royal children. In 1711 his only son, Monseigneur the Dauphin, died

LOUIS XIV, THE DAUPHIN, THE DUC DE BOURGOGNE, THE DUC D'ANJOU (AFTERWARDS LOUIS XV), AND MADAME DE MAINTENON

From the painting by Largillière in the Wallace Collection

suddenly of smallpox at Meudon. Then all the King's thoughts and hopes turned to his well-loved grandson, the duc de Bourgogne, now the next heir of France, and above all to the Dauphine, the supremely cherished Marie Adelaide. As the long cold night of old age settled upon his spirit, he clung more and more to her society—letting her wild enchanting ways divert his mind for a moment from the weight of his sorrows.

It was just this last link with youth and lightness of heart, this last glimpse of the sunlit heights of life, which he was called upon to forego.

Ten months after the loss of his only son, the old King was again face to face with death.

In February, 1712, at Versailles, the Dauphine was seized by a sudden fever, which in a few hours developed into a malignant form of measles. The doctors, alarmed by the knowledge that five hundred victims were dying monthly in Paris of the same illness, brought all the resources of their science to bear—that is to say, they gave opiates, made her smoke, and bled her repeatedly. In two days she was *in extremis*. Frantic with grief, her young husband, himself infected with the dread complaint, was soon obliged to leave her bedside.

The King, stricken to the soul, remained by the Dauphine's dying bed. She was now beyond help, and on the fourth day she died.

Her husband was already in high fever. He lived just six days after the death of his wife.

Stupefied and bewildered, the great King saw his family going before him to the grave. It was impossible to realize what was happening. His race, his dynasty, was about to suffer extinction. Surely the last depth of misery was touched. The lives of two

very little and very delicate children alone interposed, —one, the little duc de Bretagne, now Dauphin, five years old, and the other a sickly baby, the little Louis, duc d'Anjou, just two.

Under the date of 7 March, 1712, the diarist Dangeau writes : " The new Dauphin is very ill, it is thought with the measles. The duc d'Anjou has the measles also. As these two princes are seriously ill, the King has had them baptized. . . . They were, by the King's desire, both named Louis.

" 8th, Versailles.—As soon as the King awoke, he was informed that the Dauphin and his brother were growing much worse. In addition to the Court physicians, five of distinguished eminence have been sent for from Paris.

" A little before midnight, the Dauphin died. He was a very promising prince (though only five years old) and well proportioned. Thus has death carried off within a year three Dauphins, grandfather, father, and grandson, and a Dauphiness. . . . The duc d'Anjou is better, and hopes are entertained of his recovery.

" 17th.—All the women who belonged to the establishment of the Dauphin of Bretagne, are to be removed into that of his brother, who will then have thirty-two female attendants. This prince now enjoys good health."

The tiny flickering flame of life was fanned by his governess, Madame de Ventadour, who rebelled against the prescriptions of the Court doctors, took her own measures, and brought the child safely through the illness that had so nearly proved mortal.

The infant Dauphin Louis was now the one frail link that offered to *Le Roi Soleil* any chance of a direct successor to the throne. Thus, as the great reign draws

to a close, the two figures are left alone in the picture, each in pathetic isolation. The great King in his sombre old age, bowed with the weight of his years and his sorrows, setting his last wistful hopes on so frail an existence ; and the great-grandson, more terribly alone than any little outcast child in all the kingdom, about to set forth on the career that held so many dazzling possibilities never to be fulfilled.

For weeks the King had known he was dying, and, with his old dignity and majesty, bade the doctors let him die in peace.

Some days before his death, the little child of five years old stood beside his bed. So, in the dim mists of his far-off childhood, Louis remembered standing by the death-bed of his own father. He, too, was a king at five years old. The fear and the desolation, the solitude, the difficulties, the mistakes rushed back upon his recollection. The long years melted away with all their illusive glories, their disasters, their empty pleasures. The dying eyes, bent upon the earnest face of the beautiful child, saw anew all the promise, the golden flood of hope that once was his.

The words he spoke to the little Louis, wise and noble, echo down the centuries, charged with a note of deep and tender human feeling.

" Darling, you are going to be a great king, but all your happiness will depend on submission to God, and on the pains you take to help your people. In order to do that, you must avoid war as far as possible ; it is the ruin of nations. Do not follow the bad example I have given you in that. I often undertook war too lightly, and pursued it from vanity. Do not imitate me in that, or in my taste for building, but reign peacefully, and let your chief care be to help

your subjects. Profit by the good education you are receiving from Madame la duchesse de Ventadour Obey her, and follow the good feelings she has inspired."

He kissed the little Dauphin twice, and gave him his blessing. The little boy left the room in tears.

The King had resigned life. He spoke of the Dauphin as "*the young King*," and was heard to use the expression, "*when I was King*." To the last, he wanted only the companionship of Madame de Maintenon. Utterly worn out, she left him when the final unconsciousness set in, retreating to her sanctuary of St. Cyr. Only his servants were with him at the last.

The great King died on Sunday, 1 September, 1715. "He gave up his soul without any effort, as a candle that goes out."

CHAPTER XII

CHILDHOOD OF LOUIS XV

LOUIS XIV had expressed a wish that immediately after his death, his great-grandson, the new King, should be taken away from Versailles to the fortress of Vincennes.

On the day that the body of the King was taken, with very little pomp and ceremony, to its resting-place at St. Denis, the child Louis XV was accordingly removed to Vincennes.

The first four months of the reign were passed there. The King was then removed to the palace of the Tuileries, where he remained till June, 1722, when the Court was transferred to Versailles. The maréchal de Villeroy was his governor and Madame de Ventadour his governess.

Devoted in every word and deed to the child, these two attendants never let him out of their sight till he was seven years old. He was surrounded by the most loving and tender care. The people of Paris adored him. In these innocent days he might well have claimed his title of later years, "*Bien-Aimé*," when, dressed in white in honour of the Blessed Virgin, his fragile little figure was daily visible, playing in the gardens of the Tuileries, or passing in his coach about the narrow and tortuous streets of old Paris.

Often he was taken to St. Cyr to visit Madame de Maintenon. His earliest recollections would be of the holy calm of this retreat, and of the joy he brought into the life of a very old lady who received him there. When he was seven, and Madame de Ventadour handed him over to the care of tutors and governors, she sent his last white child's dress to be consecrated for the Virgin's shrine at St. Cyr.

As a child, the King had no taste for pageant and display. He liked the small details of life.

Madame de Ventadour, in a letter to Madame de Maintenon, describes how, after some fatiguing ceremony, which did not in the least interest him, Louis "*fit ensuite son potage lui-même, et trouva du soulagement à ne plus faire le roi.*"

He had moods, she added, even in the cradle, a sad air, a need of awakening, and was without natural gaiety. His happiest days were those which he spent in the park of La Muette, playing with dairy utensils and a miniature cow, which one of the ladies of the Court had given him. He showed intense pleasure at a gift sent him by his grandfather, the King of Sardinia, of a pickaxe and some little dogs trained to hunt for truffles.

It seems to have been the policy of all his guardians to keep him as much of a baby as possible. He walked encumbered with leading-strings till he was seven, and wore an infant's garment made of whalebone, supposed to give support to the figure, till he was eleven.

Dangeau has left a description of the parting of Louis with Madame de Ventadour.

"15th February 1717. Paris. The King rose in the morning in pretty good spirits; but when the duc

d'Orléans arrived, and Madame de Ventadour resigned to him the precious charge that had been entrusted to her, and kissed the King's hand on taking leave of him, he threw his arms round her neck, and embraced her tenderly, bursting into tears. Madame de Ventadour said to him, ' But, Sire, we must listen to reason.' ' Ah, mamma,' he replied, ' I cannot attend to reason when I must part with you.' . . . The King would take no dinner and was in very low spirits the whole of the day."

His new tutor was Cardinal Fleury, whose humour pleased and distracted his many idle moments. The boy was thought too delicate for a solid education. He received no training in application, and naturally never learnt it in after life.

Peter the Great, Tsar of Russia, came on a visit to Paris when Louis was seven. It was a strange meeting between the two kings, one the tyrant of the great, rough, half-barbaric and unexplored northern realm, and the other representative of the most highly civilized, luxurious, and advanced society then known to the world. For a moment they are seen together, the colossal figure of the Russian, with his savage air, his tawny skin, his sudden, loud, roaring laughter, and the voice that always sounded angry, contrasted with the delicate form of the beautiful child. There was something uncouth yet majestic in the Tsar's impulsive greeting. Brushing aside the ceremonious suggestions of courtiers, he raised the little Louis in his arms and kissed him heartily.

" Sire, you are commencing your reign, and I am completing mine ; I hope you will favour my successor with your friendship ? "

" Are you so old already, Sire ? " replied the King ;

" wait until your hair is as white as was my grandfather's."

" Alas, I fear I have not time to complete my work. As for you, Sire, I predict that you will surpass your grandsire in wisdom, glory, and power."

" I hope but cannot believe it." The quaint words come gravely from the childish lips that must have known already a careful training in the courtesies of speech.

A clear vision of the boy is given in the memoirs of Cardinal Dubois.

" The King is twelve years old : he is of amazing beauty. I do not know a more charming child. His large black eyes, with their long, curled lashes, have what one might call a fine outlook. . . . He displays his little figure when he walks with quite a royal air, and he knows what respect is better than any grand master of ceremonies. What is remarkable, however, in a child who is at least as egotistical as all children, is that he is affable and polite with every one, and his fits of naughtiness are not frequent. . . . He is very proud of his person, and when he can call attention to his pretty feet and hands, he is like a peacock spreading his tail. As for wits, he has quite as much as a king need have, which is mighty little."

The duchesse d'Orléans (mother of the Regent) gives another vivid picture.

" It is impossible for any child to be more agreeable than our young King : he has large dark eyes and long crisp eyelashes ; a good complexion, a charming little mouth, long and thick dark brown hair, little red cheeks, a stout and well-formed body, and very pretty hands and feet : his gait is noble and lofty, and he puts on his hat exactly like the late King. The shape of his

face is neither too long nor too short; but the worst thing, and which he inherits from his mother, is that he changes colour very frequently. Sometimes he looks ill, but in half an hour his colour will have returned. His manners are easy, and it may be said without flattery that he dances very well.[1] He is quick and clever in all that he attempts; he has already (1720) begun to shoot at pheasants and partridges, and has a great passion for shooting. He is as like his mother as one drop of water is to another; he has sense enough, and all that he seems to want is a little more affability. He is terribly haughty, and already knows what respect is. . . . His air is milder than his character, for his little head is rather an obstinate and wilful one."

A certain number of boys of his own age were allowed to play with Louis in the terrace of the Tuileries gardens, where he had a miniature pavilion. An Order was made for the child, an oval enamelled plaque representing a star and the pavilion, hanging from a blue and white ribbon. This Order was an invention of his own, and he used to bestow it on his playfellows.

Outdoor sports and occupations were not enough encouraged.

At ten years old he was fond of playing cards from morning till night. He played for money, staking large sums. One day he played for so huge a sum that the chevalier de Pezé, who held the bank, after a moment's

[1] The duc de Richelieu says the King danced badly at his first ballet, and that he announced he meant to dance still worse, in order that he might not be made to dance at all. He was so wearied with learning and rehearsing the ballet that he took a dislike to all *fêtes* and displays.

hesitation, offered a remonstrance: "Sire, do you wish to ruin me?" The child, whose temper rose at a moment's opposition, boxed the Chevalier's ears. He could not be induced to express regret or to apologize.

"The Parisians," wrote the duc de Richelieu, "love the little King. *Il est joli comme l'Amour; il est content des applaudissements; il en rit beaucoup; il y répond avec grâce.* He fell dangerously ill. The Spanish Court packed up to come and reign. But he soon got well. Then, to annoy the Regent, the women of the markets and the orange sellers came to the Palais Royal with branches of trees, then entered the courtyard, crying, '*Vive le Roi!*' and dancing. In all the streets refreshments were offered, and wine was given to passers-by, and every one danced to celebrate the return of the King's health.

"On Sunday the King went to Notre-Dame to Mass to thank God for his recovery."

Massillon was his religious instructor. He found the young King an apt pupil in matters of faith and ritual. He was of a devout and serious nature.

"1720. 13 April. Paris. The King went, after dinner, to hawk in the park of Vincennes: in returning he met, in the rue St. Antoine, the Holy Sacrament, which was on its way to a sick person. He stopped his carriage, alighted, and knelt down in the street, although it was very dirty. This greatly edified all who saw him. He would have attended the Holy Sacrament to the home of the sick person, but for the fear there was of impure air."

In the pages of history the personality of the boy Louis falls into the background. The fortunes of France hung upon the engrossing affairs of the Regency.

While life was passing quietly and happily at the Tuileries, a constant struggle for place and power went forward on all sides.

Henceforth for eight years, till the King came of age, the figure of the Regent dominates the history of France.

The Regent held his Court at the Palais Royal. Its doings, painted in lurid colours, have come down to us in the pictures of countless historians. Philippe d'Orléans, as the centre of interest, with his pleasant, cordial manners, his easy lack of moral sense, his encouragement of excess, was exactly suited to the temper of the hour.

Before he was twelve years old, the King was betrothed to the Infanta of Spain, the eldest daughter of his uncle, Philip V. The bride, Ana Maria Victoria, was three years old. The plan suited the ambitions of the Regent, who was the next heir to the throne of France, for such a marriage for Louis meant that, for many years, no Dauphin could be born. Meantime only the frail life of a delicate boy stood between himself and the prospect of a throne.

The negotiations for the marriage were conducted by Dubois. The King's consent was asked at a council meeting in September, 1721. Tears and silence were his reply. "*Allons, mon maître,*" urged Villeroy, "*il faut faire la chose de bonne grâce.*" Still there was no reply. Not until Fleury had whispered to him for a full quarter of an hour was a simple "yes" extracted from the reserved and sensitive boy.

The affair had been very badly explained to him, for the poor child was under the impression that the full duties and responsibilities of marriage were to begin at once. No wonder he maintained a silent

protest against the idea of a helpmeet and companion of three years old. When he understood, he saw the humour of the situation. He said to one of his courtiers, who came to announce his own approaching marriage: "*Je suis plus avancé que vous, j'ai une femme et même un enfant.*"

A distinguished company, which included the duc de St. Simon and Madame de Ventadour, was sent to Madrid from Paris to fetch the little Infanta.

Treated already as Queen of France, the child Princess had been worshipped at the Spanish Court, especially by her parents, who were immensely proud of the pretty, clever child. When the moment came for parting with her, King Philippe and the Queen wished to go with her to the gates of the palace. Strength and resolution failed them. The Princess was lifted from their arms.

In a letter from Cardinal Dubois to Spain, dated March, 1722, after he had carried away the little bride, he writes: "The Queen Infanta made the two Princesses, de Beaujolais and de Chartres (daughters of the Regent), dance before her, and treated them as children younger than herself, although they are double her age, asking them from time to time if they were tired, and holding them by their leading-strings in case they should fall. She kissed them tenderly when they went away, and said, 'Little Princesses, go to your homes, and come to see me every day.'"

The preparations in Paris for the reception of the little Infanta were on a magnificent scale, involving enormous cost. A French writer says: "Is it not impertinent to make such preparation for a child of three years and ten months, as also to arrange a marriage for the King before he is of an age to con-

sent? . . . The Regent went to see her. They say she is rather pretty than ugly, that she is small for her age, but has an infinite amount of wit and vivacity. The Infanta has brought with her a Spanish woman who was her *remueuse*, and without whom she refuses to walk."

The poor little bride was called "the Queen," a position she was never to attain.

The Queen Infanta entered Paris with four companies of *gardes du corps* dragoons. The King waited for her at Bourg-la-Reine and embraced her, but did not say one word; he came back to Paris and received her at the Louvre, always without saying a word. The small Infanta observed that the King was handsome, but that he spoke no more than her doll.

The baby girl of three sat on the knee of the duchesse de Ventadour, and clung to her doll. Louis gave the marriage present next day, another doll, which cost twenty thousand livres.

There was a great ball at the *Hôtel de ville* in Paris. It is good to know that the King, having opened the revels, retired before ten o'clock. It is to be hoped that the bride long before that time was safely asleep in the care of her *remueuse*, for the ball was the scene of disgraceful disorders. Louis felt no interest in his baby-bride and hated the wedding *fêtes*. Everything bored the poor child.

There are glimpses here and there of the character of the little Infanta. In the year 1724 she caught measles, in those days a malignant disease. The doctors wished to bleed her, but the child resisted so firmly that a *ruse* was necessary. First a man dressed as a Spaniard was brought into her room, pretending that he brought orders for the operation from her

parents, the King and Queen of Spain. The Infanta defied him. Then an officer of the body-guard came in, bringing four men with shouldered muskets. The Infanta was told that this threatening band was sent by her betrothed husband, Louis, who had ordered that she should be bled. To this show of force she submitted at last.

The King's coronation was held at Reims, 25 October, 1722. Sixty-eight years had passed since the last coronation. The scene was one of great splendour. All the old ritual was renewed.

Dubois and his friends could not save the young King the long and painful fatigue of "touching for the King's Evil." Several thousands of sick persons assembled—two lines, immensely long, of kneeling figures.

It had been an immemorial custom at the coronation of the French Kings to set free thousands of birds from cages, and this beautiful little ceremony was duly observed among other ancient rites.

On the morning of the day after the King's thirteenth birthday, the Regent attended the King's awaking. He told him that he placed the affairs of state in his hands; that there was peace at home and abroad, and that the King's power was absolute. Louis made no reply; he seldom answered anybody. He was thoughtful, but afterwards, when he rose, he was unusually gay and happy. While dressing, he was attacked by a flea. Fleury said, "Sire, you are of age; you can order his punishment." "Let him be hanged," said Louis, replying in the same vein of humour. Historians have solemnly recorded this story as evidence of the inherent cruelty and tyranny of his nature!

LOUIS XV AS A CHILD
From the painting by Rigaud at Versailles

All the world thought that the King had a hard and cold temperament. It should be remembered that he was warmly faithful to the two best influences he had known. He always loved Madame de Ventadour and Cardinal Fleury.

Political plot and counterplot, virulent hatreds and jealousies, went on all through the King's minority. Various Princes of the Blood resented the fact that, should the King die without heirs, nothing could prevent the duc d'Orléans from becoming King of France. Under these circumstances it was determined that the little Infanta should go back to Spain, and a wife of more suitable age be forced upon Louis, in order that an heir might put an end to the Orléans pretensions. The marriage with the Infanta was a disaster for the realm. The little girl was now six. A solemn promise had been made to Spain that the actual betrothal, a binding ceremony, should be accomplished when she was seven. It would then be too late to retreat with any vestige of honour.

It was decided to send the Infanta back to her parents at once. The child was told that her father wished to see her, and no doubt set forth joyfully enough. The King, who had always maintained perfect indifference in the matter, did not even say good-bye, for he was away hunting at Marly when she left Versailles.

The indignation in Spain was so unbounded that a general massacre of the French in Madrid was feared, and the countries hung perilously for a while on the verge of war. The marquis de Santa Cruz was sent to meet the little rejected bride, with an escort of four hundred persons. On arriving at Madrid, by way of soothing the popular resentment, he exhibited

a piece of black bread, as a sample of the food upon which the royal child had been nourished at the French Court !

With the disappearance of the little Infanta from Versailles in 1724, the child-life of the palace came to an end. It was necessary that the King be married without delay.

There were eighty-nine marriageable princesses in Europe : twenty-five Catholics, three Anglicans, thirteen Calvinists, fifty-five Lutherans, and three Greeks. This number was reduced to a short leet of twenty-seven, and amongst these a bride must be found.

A marriage with an English princess caught the imagination of the duc de Bourbon. So powerful a threat to Spain appealed to all French politicians. A portrait of the young King was sent to England, so beautiful that it caused a sensation at the Court there. King George and his Ministers, quite unmoved by sentiment, refused the match. " How could we hope," wrote de Noailles, " that the English would send to the arms of a king of France, a princess who, by their British Constitution, was not excluded from inheriting the throne of England ? "

Failing the English match, a bride was sought for the King who had no threat at her call. What was wanted was found in the daughter of Stanislas, a dethroned King of Poland.

Marie Leczinska, absolutely without political importance, was simple, pure, studious, interested in domestic duties, and fond of church embroidery. " *Je conviens qu'elle est laide,*" wrote the duc d'Autin ; " *mais elle me plait au dela de tout ce que je peux vous exprimer.*" She was seven years older than Louis.

A woman of sympathy and good sense, she lacked only what were, in those days, the essentials of success, beauty and charm. The marriage, so disastrous to her happiness, was celebrated in 1725, when the King was fifteen. He was nervous and timid in the presence of women, and is said to have rarely spoken to the Queen. At the same time, he showed, in these early days, a certain loyalty towards her. If the beauty of any woman was praised in his presence, he always murmured, "She is not so handsome as the Queen."

The first years of his marriage were the happiest that Louis was to know. The silent, suspicious child was clever enough to realize that, in spite of his great name, he had no vestige of power, and that he was not strong enough to fight his battle for independence. He leaned on Fleury, whose personal influence was good. He accepted life with the Queen in a spirit of duty, and there, with a stronger or cleverer woman, he might have found lasting happiness.

But the men and women who composed his Court wished for nothing so dreary as a king devoted to duty and absorbed in domestic life. Through all his childhood the worst of men, and the worst of women, waited for him, ready for the development of mind and body that should make him their prey. The Regency had left behind it a loosening of all moral fibre. To be popular, to be in the swim, to have any claim to the distinction of fashionable life, men and women alike must disregard the accepted standards of decent living. How could they endure to serve a king who conformed to higher ideals of his own?

Surrounded by such influences, the spirit of the young King succumbed at last. After years of fidelity

to the Queen, who was devout, rigid, and dull, he fell under the influence of the sisters de Nesles, Mesdames de Mailly, de Vintimille, de Lauraguais, and la Châteauroux.

The years of good behaviour had been idle years. Hard work might even now have saved him. But he was shut out from responsibilities of state. Discouraged by Fleury from any effort to play his part, he became more and more a stranger to the affairs of his realm. Nothing had any hold upon his character. His standards and ideals went down into the dust. The Court resumed the shameless ways of the Regency.

CHAPTER XIII

CHILDREN OF LOUIS XV

CARDINAL FLEURY was practically master of France. Louis XV was a spoilt child, indolent, badly trained, hating business, seeking only to keep at bay the depression that belonged by heredity to his Bourbon blood. His deep distaste for business and affairs of state exactly suited the plans of the Cardinal. There would be no inconvenient assumption of power, no awakening in his dulled soul of the vital spirit of the boy Louis XIV.

A husband at fifteen, Louis XV was only seventeen when, on 14 August, 1727, his first children were born, the twin daughters who remained always his favourites among his large family.[1] Ten sons and daughters

[1] The following were the children of Louis XV and Marie Leczinska :—

(1) Louise Elisabeth, born 14 August, 1727 ; married 1739, Philippe, son of Philip V of Spain ; died at Versailles, 6 December, 1759.

(2) Anne Henriette, twin with above ; died 10 February, 1752.

(3) Louise Marie, born 28 July, 1728 ; died 19 February, 1733.

(4) Louis, born 4 September, 1729 ; married first, 1745, Marie Thèrese, daughter of Philip V of Spain, who died 1746 ; second, 1747, Marie Josephe de Saxe, daughter of the Elector of Saxony ; died at Fontainebleau, 20 December, 1765.

(5) Philippe, duc d'Anjou, born 30 August, 1730 ; died 7 April, 1733.

came to fill the long galleries and formal gardens of Versailles with sound of laughter and flying feet.

There was deep disappointment at Versailles and in the country over the sex of the first children. Within a year another daughter was born, Louise Marie, and the poor Queen, overpowered with a sense of failure, went for the first time to Notre-Dame, at Paris, to ask the Virgin for a son. By way of humiliation she wore no trimming on her flesh-coloured Court dress. It is a little difficult to follow her reasons for wearing a mass of diamonds on the same occasion. In September of the next year the much-desired boy was born, Louis the Dauphin, who was never to ascend the throne of France. Sixty-eight years had passed since the birth of a Dauphin, and all France exulted. Another son was born in less than a year. He died at two years old. Five more daughters followed in quick succession—Adelaide, Victoire, Sophie, Félicité, and a second Louise Marie.

These poor children were from the beginning the victims of ceremonial. Eight *femmes de chambre* waited on each little girl, and forty attendants followed them even when they passed from room to room.

The princesses, whose public baptism was long delayed, were known simply by number, "Madame Première," "Madame Seconde," and so on. Very little individuality attaches to their memory. They

(6) Marie Adelaide, born 23 March, 1732; died at Trieste, March, 1800.

(7) Victoire Louise Marie Thèrese, born 11 May, 1733; died at Trieste, 7 June, 1799.

(8) Sophie Philippine Elisabeth Justine, born 17 July, 1734; died 3 March, 1782.

(9) Thèrese Félicité, born 16 May, 1736; died 1744.

(10) Louise Marie, born 5 July, 1737; died 23 December, 1787.

are grey shadows, flitting here and there in sombre guise among the brilliant figures and great names of history.

Faithful to his old friend, the King appointed Madame de Ventadour, the *chère maman* of his boyhood, as governess to the Children of France. She was an old lady now, and the practical duties of the post were carried out by her granddaughter, the duchesse de Tallard. The organization of a decent education for the bevy of little girls was evidently not included in these duties. They were allowed to grow up in great ignorance. Rules of etiquette, a knowledge of precedence, the correct manners at Court ceremonies, were more considered than anything else. As time went on these details assumed an undue proportion in the thoughts of Queen Marie. The slave of etiquette, and of official duty, she seems to have enjoyed very little of domestic life with her children.

One or two pictures of the royal group have been left by the diarists of the day. The duc de Luynes records under the date 15 September, 1737: "The Queen was present at M. le Dauphin's ball. Since the return of the Court from Fontainebleau there have always been two balls a week, on Thursday in Mesdames' apartments, on Sunday in the Dauphin's. The King and Queen were in their arm-chairs, with their backs to the window." . . . First the Dauphin and Louise Elisabeth danced by themselves. "Then the figure dances and quadrilles began . . . in the first round of the minuets no one turned, but danced facing the King and Queen, with hat doffed." At another ball de Luynes mentions that when the royal children danced figure dances and minuets, every one

stood up, but that in the quadrilles, every one remained seated. It was the custom.

There is a portrait of the twins, painted by Gobert about 1737, in dresses exactly alike. In feature they did not much resemble each other. Louise Elisabeth had strongly marked features and full lips, large eyes under thick eyebrows, and dark complexion. Henriette was much more attractive, slighter and fairer. Louise Marie, who never bore the title of *troisième*, was the prettiest of the family. She died at four years old, passionately lamented by the King and Queen, who a few weeks later lost their second boy, the duc d'Anjou. The death of the little girl is thus mentioned by a Court chronicler: "This matter has little interest, and no mourning will be worn."

Madame Troisième was Adelaide, who was destined to play a more important part than her sisters, for she managed to acquire influence over her father. She was distinguished by him by the affectionate nickname of *Loque*, or Tatters. As a child she showed far more character than any of her sisters. At eleven years old she was caught escaping from Versailles, scantily attired, with fourteen louis in her pocket, just going to mount a horse, and ride off to assume the rôle of Joan of Arc, "to fight for Papa-roi, to beat the English, and take the King of England prisoner." Here, however, her scheme deviated from those of Joan the Maid, for her idea was "to invite the chiefs to share her couch, and to kill them one after the other." She said she knew of a man who would go with her and serve her. It was the boy who attended to her donkeys.

Victoire, the fifth daughter, was affectionately termed *Coche*, or Piggy, by her father. Sophie was *Graille*, or Mite. She was the least attractive of the King's

children. "Madame Sophie," says Madame de Campan, "was remarkably ugly; never did I behold a person with as revolting an appearance: she walked with the greatest rapidity; and in order to recognize people without looking at them, she acquired the habit of leering on one side, like a hare." Through life she remained a nonentity. She rarely spoke, but a thunderstorm frightened her so much that she became friendly and communicative with anyone who happened to be near. When the storm was over she froze again into a haughty silence.

The seventh daughter, little Félicité, only lived seven years, and the eighth, Louise Marie, called by her father *Chiffe*, or Rag, became the saintly Sister Louise of the Carmelites. She was excessively intelligent and full of life and humour. In figure she was slightly deformed, and her head was too large for her small body.

Both the King and Queen would seem to have loved their children when they were little, therefore the arrangements made for their education were amazing. The extravagances of the Court, continued through so many generations, and the desperate condition of the working people, had made economy a pressing necessity. Casting about for some expense to be abolished, Fleury hit upon the idea of economizing in the affairs of the Children of France. Each little daughter was yearly costing the State forty thousand pounds. To abolish some of the perfectly useless and costly offices attached to their establishments, and to unite all the little ones in one household, would be to encroach upon the sacred customs of Court etiquette—a sacrifice not for a moment to be entertained. It was resolved instead to send the children away. The twins and Madame Adelaide were kept at Versailles, the rest were

sent away to be brought up in a convent. Many stately abbeys within reach of Paris would doubtless have proudly received the charge, and it has never been explained why the group of royal children was remorselessly exiled to the Convent of Fontevralt—at a distance of eight leagues—an arrangement entailing a journey of thirteen days, and complete separation from their parents. The little girls were aged five, four, two, and one year. Eight carriages and twenty baggage wagons conveyed them and their belongings. They left Versailles, 16 June, 1738, and arrived twelve days later. The Abbess, Mlle de Rochechouart, and the nuns, all dressed by order in white, so that their first appearance should not depress the new-comers, received them at the convent. Four little girls of the same ages as the princesses were provided as playmates. Perhaps the change and excitement of the journey were welcome to the children, but what could have been the feelings of the mother, Queen Marie, who watched them all borne away? One of the group, the infant Félicité, she never saw again, for she died in the convent and was buried there. The rest lived out their childhood within the walls. It is almost incredible that the royal parents neither went to visit these children, nor recalled them to Court for twelve years. They never once saw them during that time.

The Abbey of Fontevralt was a great mass of buildings surrounded by a wall. There were two monasteries, one for men and one for women. There was also a good house called Bourbon Lodge. This was put in repair, and luxuriously furnished, for the little daughters of France.

The education given by the nuns at Fontevralt was

very poor, and the life dreadfully dull. Louise could not read at twelve years old. The children were taught music and dancing, but no attempt was made to form their minds or fit them for life. A great deal of well-meant indulgence and kindness alternated with the most extraordinary severities. Victoire and Sophie suffered all their lives from nervous terrors, begun in the convent, when, for some offence, they were sent to say the prayers for the dying in a chapel near a madman's house, whose shrieks and ravings they could hear. Again the trembling girls were ordered to say their evening prayers alone in the vaults where the nuns were buried.

One story survives of Madame Victoire at Fontevralt. The dancing master taught the princesses a new dance, and informed them that it was called "*Le Menuet couleur de Rose.*" Madame Victoire, either disliking the colour, or feeling in a wilful humour, said she did not approve of the name, and that it was to be called, "*Le Menuet Bleu.*" The master objected, but Victoire held to her point, and declined to go on with the dance unless the name were altered. Neither would give way. The Abbess was called, who in her turn assembled the whole community, to decide on the merits of *rose* or *bleu*. Victoire triumphed, for the nuns agreed not to displease her. The master was instructed to call it "*Le Menuet Bleu,*" and the dance went on.

The King was dangerously ill in 1744, and his recovery was celebrated with festivities at Fontevralt. Little Madame Septième, who was eight years old, was not well, but bore up as well as she could in her natural anxiety to take part in the *fête*. No one had sufficient authority or firmness to send the ailing child to bed.

She was sickening for smallpox, and in consequence of this neglect, only lived a few days. The seventh daughter of France was hastily baptized Félicité on her death-bed.

A contemporary writes: "The child retained consciousness, was very sweet, and kissed the crucifix frequently. At six in the evening coma set in, but passed at four in the morning enough to give a little hope. . . . She died shortly before noon." A tiny atom of forgotten humanity, she lies in the sepulchre of the Plantagenets at Fontevralt, beside Richard, *Cœur de Lion*. Her death made no perceptible impression at Court. The mother did not go to the theatre or play cards for a few days. The King made no difference in his pursuits even for a day.

The artist Nattier was sent to Fontevralt, in 1747, to paint the portraits of the three remaining children, which are now at Versailles. The King surprised the Queen with these portraits, which greatly delighted her.

"The two eldest are really beautiful," she wrote, "but I have never seen anything so charming as the little one; she has the pathetic, very remote expression of melancholy. I have never seen a countenance so unique; she is touching, gentle, spiritual."

About this time it occurred to the King that his younger children were growing up. In his devotion to Henriette and Adelaide, he had seemed almost to forget the little exiled group, but now the fifteen-year-old Madame Victoire was recalled, and in 1750, Sophie and Louise were also brought back to Versailles.

The Court was scarcely the place for a group of young, ignorant girls, with no training but that of the cloister.

MADAME LOUISE, DAUGHTER OF LOUIS XV
From the painting by Nattier at Versailles

Madame de Pompadour ruled the King and the Court.

Jeanne Poisson, born in 1721, was of undistinguished birth, but remarkable beauty and cleverness, a woman born to shine, not only by virtue of her looks, but by an array of commanding talents seldom united in one person. Her house in Paris was the rendezvous of all that was brilliant in literature, art, and music.

The King first saw her at a ball given in honour of the marriage of his son the Dauphin in 1745.

In a few months Jeanne was created marquise de Pompadour, and from thenceforward the history of the reign of Louis XV is her history. She transformed everything. The Court, greatly sunk in credit and splendour since the great days of Louis XIV, began to revive again.

She was full of great ideas, enormously extravagant and ambitious, but of unquestionable genius.

To the King she was everything. She accepted the full weight of state affairs. Nothing was settled or done without her sanction. Her rule was absolute, even in military matters. She went with the King to his Flanders campaign, which ended in the French victory of Fontenoy, controlling and organizing.

" The army is so absolutely under her government," says a French writer, " that she appoints and removes all the Generals at her pleasure ; and God knows what Generals they are whom she dismisses, and what Generals they are whom she appoints. God knows what battles she says that we gain, and what battles we lose." All state business passed through her hands, all chief offices in Church and State were at her disposal and sold by her to the highest bidder.

Louis had never been able to amuse himself, and he had never either become a man or put away childish

things. He was liable to fits of depression, and so easily bored that his favourite was obliged to fill up his days and nights with a constant succession of plays, excursions, *fêtes*, *petits soupers*, and other less innocent amusements. As long as his mind was taken up with these, the Pompadour could manage the pressing affairs of the realm ; but the double duty was more than nature would endure. She paid for it with her life, but not until she had reigned for twenty years.

At the height of Madame de Pompadour's power the King recalled his daughters to Court. As the convent authorities had aimed only at a training in devotional exercises, the little bevy of girls went back to Versailles as unfitted as they could well be to play any dignified part there. Finding the whole Court divided into two camps, those of the King and the Queen, they joined with their brother the Dauphin in siding with their mother. " They groan over the King's amours and abuse his mistresses," writes d'Argenson. In spite of their hostility, which they doubtless soon learned to dissemble, the King made pets and companions of his little girls, although they attempted no concealment of their detestation of the Pompadour.

The story of the princesses' daily admittance to the august presence of their father has often been told. Madame Adelaide occupied apartments communicating with those of the King. At the hour when his morning coffee was served, Tatters rang a bell, which warned Piggy. Piggy in her turn rang for Mite, who rang for Rag. All then were in motion to get to the King as quickly as possible. By the time the last summons was given, the King was half-way through his morning meal, generally a hurried affair, because he wanted to go out hunting immediately, and the little Rag, who

was very short and lame, and whose rooms were in a distant part of the palace, in spite of desperate haste, seldom arrived in time to do more than see him rise from table.

"Every evening at six," writes Madame de Campan in her memoirs, "the ladies interrupted my reading to them to accompany the princes to Louis XV; this visit was called the King's *débotter*, and was marked by a kind of etiquette. The princesses put on an enormous hoop, which set out a petticoat ornamented with gold or embroidery; they fastened a long train round their waists, and concealed the 'undress' of the rest of their clothing by a long cloak of black taffety which enveloped them up to the chin. The gentlemen ushers, the ladies-in-waiting, the pages, the esquires, and the ushers bearing large flambeaux, accompanied them to the King. In a moment the whole palace, generally so still, was in motion, the King kissed each princess on the forehead, and the visit was so short that the reading which it interrupted was frequently resumed at the end of a quarter of an hour: the princesses returned to their apartments, and untied the strings of their petticoats and trains; they resumed their tapestry, and I my book."

Life at Court was exceedingly dull. The princesses would have liked country pursuits, but the stiff alleys and gardens of Versailles, the park-like woods and artificial wildness, offered nothing attractive. Conscious of the defects in their education, they became very studious, and filled their empty lives with a great deal of serious reading. All were passionately fond of music, and played on a variety of instruments. Adelaide was especially devoted to all kinds of music. She had no ear, and did not know whether she played

right or wrong. One of the diversions of her father was to hand her a violin, and observe with what vigour and what perfect satisfaction she drew forth a painful series of discordant sounds.

The eldest Child of France, Louise Elisabeth, was the only one of the eight daughters provided with a husband and a home of her own. In 1739 she was married to her cousin, Don Philip; one of the younger sons of Philip V of Spain. She was twelve when the marriage was celebrated at Versailles and at Paris with extreme pomp. The duc d'Orléans acted as proxy. At the first ceremony Louise Elisabeth wore a State dress of black and gold cloth; her mantle of gold net was carried by her twin sister Henriette. On the following day she wore cloth of silver and diamonds. The economical Fleury was scandalized at the expense of the trousseau. Balls and *fêtes* in Paris to celebrate the event cost the city vast sums. In the midst of the rejoicings the French Princess set out for her Spanish home. The parting with Henriette was a bitter trial. The new life had no attractions for her. Her heart was always at her old home. As Duchess of Parma she returned for long visits to her father's Court, and was there in December 1759, when she was attacked by smallpox. She lived only six days. The entire royal family ran away to Marly to escape infection and the sight of death. Poor Louise Elisabeth was carried to her grave at St. Denis with very little ceremony and few prayers.

The story of Henriette, Madame Seconde, is poignantly simple and brief. Full of spirit and grace, her figure remains as the most attractive of all the King's children. Slight, delicate, and dreamy, Madame Seconde loved her cousin, the duc de Chartres, and

her love was returned. Her marriage was, however, wrecked on the rock of political intrigue by Cardinal Fleury. But a note of romance, more appealing to British interest, is sounded concerning Henriette. The fire of her dark eyes had enthralled the imagination of an honoured guest at her father's Court, the Scottish Prince Charles Edward Stuart, the hero of the last chivalrous enterprise of the century.

" The Prince very often drank to the Black Eye, by which he meant the second daughter of France," records one of his devoted followers in Scotland. Vague and illusive, lacking all detail and continuity, the episode retains the delicate charm of all things of lovely promise that never found fulfilment. Whether Henriette knew the conquest her dark eyes had achieved, while her picture was carried in memory northwards across the sea, when the Prince embarked on his great adventure, research has not revealed. Among the shadows of the past no further picture can be evolved of the ethereal form of Henriette linked with the knightly figure of Bonnie Prince Charlie.

Henriette lived only till her twenty-fifth year. The King was in despair when she began to fade and grow pale. He ordered her to rouge—a very common custom, even among children.

One of the Scottish Jacobite exiles sheltered at the French Court affords in his diary a few details of her death.

" January 30th, 1752.—Madame Henriet, eldest daughter of the King and twin with M. Don Philip, died of a high feaver ye 7th day ; had a sort of Leperesy in the head. Madame Henriet's body was exposed some hours in the evening dressed as if alive, carried

about 12 to Palace of Tuileries in Paris and exposed all next day, face bare, after that embalmed, laid in the coffin and put *en dépôt*, room hung with white. The Dauphin and all the Royal family put on mourning six weeks for the sister. The Court wore black full-mounted coats, black stokins swords and buckles, frienged linnen. Then the Dauphin and Dames went and threw holy water on their sister's coffin. Madame Henriet was not buried till March 9th, when the Dauphin and three Dames attended the funeral at St. Denis."

Her whole family, plunged into the darkest grief, bewailed Henriette. Most moving of all lamentations is that uttered by the little Louise, who was twelve years old. "Why did they not leave me at Fontevralt? I should never have known her then."

Adelaide, Madame Troisième, was formed altogether of different clay; masculine, independent, impulsive, she was the only one of the group inflexibly resolved to play a rôle and make herself felt. Various negotiations for her marriage fell through. She was condemned to stagnation, for such was life at Versailles, except for those who paid court to Madame de Pompadour. Intensely jealous of her dignity, Adelaide could never bring herself to do so. She remained at Court until 1791, and ended her days in exile at Trieste, whither she fled with Victoire at the time of the Revolution. Bereaved of every one, and a beggar, she lived till 1800, longer than any other members of her unfortunate family. Of the ten children of Louis XV, Adelaide and Victoire alone lived to see the Revolution and the end of the monarchy which they had believed so sacred an institution.

When the storm of the Revolution broke, Victoire

and Adelaide showed a proud fortitude. After their dull, uneventful lives they were called, in their old age, to live through high and dangerous adventure. They met adversity with spirit and courage. In February, 1791, they finally fled from France. The first years of their exile were spent in Rome, lightened by the hope that matters would change for the better and the King be recalled to his throne. As old age overtook them all their hopes were extinguished; the lights of life were lowered one by one as the final catastrophe closed in upon their race. Poor, unwelcome, hunted from place to place, in miserable discomfort, these daughters of a king lived out in proud humility the last few dreary years of dreary lives.

When they reached Trieste Victoire was already dying. She died in June, 1799. "My friend, let us be brave if we can," are her last recorded words.

Of Sophie what can be said? Silent and shadowy, nothing is known except that she lived, and died at Versailles when she was forty-eight. She has left no story, no mark on the records of her day. After her death a little light is thrown on her personality by a letter written by her sister, Louise, the Carmelite nun.

"Sophie's death has pierced me to the heart, but the spirit in which she made the sacrifice of her life fills me with comfort. We may truly say that she died as she had lived. It would have been difficult for me to give you any particulars of her life, her chief virtue having been simplicity, and her chief study concealment of her real worth. I can only say that I wish I had as little to reproach myself with as she had. I have never met a purer soul."

Louise, the last of the family, was the only one destined to know real happiness. Early realizing

that it was not to be found at her father's Court, she resolved to become a nun and devote her life to God. To carry out this design required a great deal of courage and persistence. At the age of thirty-two she gained the King's consent and became a Carmelite nun at the Convent of St. Denis. Her sisters were not told of her resolution till the cloister had received her, in April, 1770. Although there was nothing enviable in their own lives, the idea of such a sacrifice appalled them. But Louise had made a good choice. A devoted and intelligent woman, her name is to this day honoured and loved in France. She had all the brains and all the lovableness of the family.

An immense wealth of human devotion was given to her father. Her life was offered in expiation of his sins, and she entered the convent solely to pray for his soul. Her one passionate desire was for his conversion. "Oh, the happiness, were I a Carmelite," she said, "and the King in truth God's man!" Sister Louise was happy in dying before the dark tragedy of the Revolution. She died at the age of fifty-one, in December, 1787. In her last delirium the mind of the royal nun went back through the mists to the days of her girlhood, when she had been a great rider and very fond of hunting. "Come! gallop; let us make haste to get to Paradise."

The figure of the Dauphin, the only surviving son of Louis XV, shows in decided contrast to the shadowy personalities of his sisters. Like most children of that day of whom any record survives, in his boyhood he gave way, unchecked, to temper.

"The Dauphin is frightfully violent, and instead of this disposition becoming corrected, it increases, though he is now ten and a half years old. He strikes

everybody about him; and the other day he gave a great box on the ear to the Bishop of Mirepoix, his tutor, for having contradicted him."

In those childish days the young Louis respected his father and loved his mother. Unfortunately Louis XV had a jealous hatred of his heir, whose manner was austere and reserved, and who did not care for the amusements of the Court. Even hunting and shooting did not appeal to him. He had the misfortune to be enormously stout, a fact which the diarists constantly mention, in default of anything really interesting to relate concerning him.

The marriage of the Dauphin was arranged when he was ten, and was celebrated when he was fourteen. The chosen bride was Marie Thérèse of Spain.

She had intelligence and sense, but her shyness and Spanish imperturbability made her an unresponsive companion. She was a sister of the little Infanta who had been so unkindly rejected by France as the bride of Louis XV. The wedding was at Versailles. The bride wore silver brocade and pearls. The stout little Dauphin was in cloth of gold embroidered with diamonds. In the evening there was a ballet, "La Princesse de Navarre," written by Voltaire and Rameau. Marie Thérèse sat stolidly through the performance. The humour of the piece was wasted upon her; she never could see a joke.

On 19 July, 1746, her child was born. The young mother only lived three days. The baby, Marie Thérèse de France, who lived not quite two years, was known and petted at Court as *la petite Madame.*

Nine months after his first Dauphine's death, the Dauphin married again, very much against his own wishes, Marie Joséfa de Saxe. The bride was fifteen,

and was fated to be the mother of the last three Bourbon Kings. She was not pretty, but is described as pleasing. Had she looked like Venus herself, Louis would have met her with stony indifference, for he could not so quickly forget his first wife, of whom he had been really fond. Nothing but pity can be felt for the poor boy compelled so soon after her loss again to go through all the ceremonies and splendours of wedding festivities at Versailles. To him it was all tragedy. In the end he learned to care for Marie Joséfa, and the marriage was one of tranquil happiness. The continuance of the Bourbon line [1] was soon amply assured.

At Marie Zéphyrine's birth there was the usual disappointment at the sex of the infant. Her mother, the Dauphine, wrote when she was six months old: "She is very ugly, and they say she resembles me as much as one drop of water resembles another. For

[1] The following children were born to Louis the Dauphin and Marie Joséfa :—

(1) Marie Zéphyrine, born 26 August, 1750; died 2 September, 1755.

(2) Louis Joseph Xavier, duc de Bourgogne, born 13 September, 1751; died 22 March, 1761.

(3) Marie Xavier Joseph, duc d'Aquitaine, born 8 September, 1753; died 22 February, 1754.

(4) Louis Auguste, duc de Berri (Louis XVI), born 23 August, 1754; guillotined 21 January, 1793.

(5) Louis Stanislas Xavier, comte de Provence (Louis XVIII), born 17 November, 1755; died 16 September, 1824.

(6) Charles Philippe, comte d'Artois (Charles X), born 9 October, 1757; died 6 November, 1836.

(7) Marie Adelaide Clotilde Xavier (Queen of Sardinia), born 21 September, 1759; died 27 May, 1802.

(8) Elisabeth Philippine Marie Hélène Thérèse, known to history as *Madame Elisabeth*, born 3 May, 1764; guillotined 10 May, 1794.

All these children were born at Versailles.

the rest, very wilful and as naughty as a small dragon." Marie Zéphyrine died at five years old. Immense and extravagant rejoicings marked the event of the birth of a boy in 1751. "He is a fine, sturdy, thriving child," writes a diarist of the day. "The King said the day after he was born that his hand was as big as his. He is ten stages prittyer than his sister." An incident of his babyhood throws light on the strange customs that still prevailed in keeping up a kind of intimate association between the masses of the people and the remote and sacred dignity of royalty. Permission was given to the public to come to see the new heir to the throne at Versailles. The baby was placed in an open cradle out of doors, but in case the crowd should press too near, the cradle was surrounded by an iron grating, an arrangement irresistibly suggestive of a Zoo. Madame Sauvé, one of his nurses, was in charge of the exhibition. Some one in the crowd managed to throw a sealed packet into the cradle. It contained a few grains of wheat, bitter complaints against the King and his Government, and a threat of assassination. The King was furious. Poor Madame Sauvé, suspected of complicity, was thrown into the Bastille and never heard of again.

This little Duke of Bourgogne, like another of his name and race, became a noble boy. Although haughty and passionate, like all his family, he had the splendid qualities of a high sense of honour and generosity of nature. As King of France he might, even at that late hour, have helped to avert the impending catastrophe. But he lived only nine years. One of his favourite gentlemen-in-waiting, the marquis de la Haie, while playing with him, let him fall off his wooden horse. The boy being apparently

unhurt, the marquis begged that he would tell no one of the accident. The child promised, and afterwards concealed as much as possible the pain he suffered in consequence of the fall. He never betrayed the secret, or told anyone, until after the death of La Haie at the battle of Minden. He then admitted that the accident had happened, but by this time his internal injuries were beyond help. He died in 1761.

Xavier Marie Joseph, duc d'Aquitaine, was born in 1753. He only lived for five months. The parents thus had to mourn their three eldest children.

The little Louis, duc de Berri, born in 1754, had, ununluckily for himself, a stronger hold on life from the first. He was followed by two little brothers, Louis Xavier, comte de Provence, and Charles, comte d'Artois. These three boys became in turn Louis XVI, Louis XVIII, and Charles X of France. At the end of the family came two little girls, Marie Adelaide, the *grosse Madame* who afterwards married the King of Sardinia, and Elisabeth, whose frail figure stands out in heroic relief against the grim confused background of the Revolution.

Tatters, Piggy, Mite, and Rag were themselves hardly out of childhood when the new little group of children again filled the royal nurseries, and the King's daughters were definitely relegated to the rôle of maiden aunts.

Horace Walpole gives a description of a visit he paid to the French Court in 1765.

"The four Mesdames, who are clumsy, plump old wenches" (the eldest, by the way, was only thirty-three), "with a bad likeness to their father, stand in a bedchamber in a row, with black caps and knotting-bags, looking good humoured, not knowing what to say. . . . Then you are carried to the Dauphin's

CHARLES X AND HIS SISTER MARIE-ADELAIDE AS CHILDREN
From the painting by Drouais in the Louvre

three boys, who, you may be sure, only bow and stare. The Duke of Berry looks weak and weak-eyed; the Count de Provence is a fine boy; the Count d'Artois well enough. The whole concludes with seeing the Dauphin's little girl dine, who is as round and as fat as a pudding."

Poor little Marie Adelaide! Her stoutness was evidently the most remarkable thing about her, and she was clearly conscious of the defect.

"It is well known how thick and voluminous is Madame Marie Adelaide, whose marriage with the Prince of Piedmont is announced," says a Court chronicler.

When she met her future husband, "You find me very fat?" were the first words of the poor child. "I find you charming," replied the Prince. "You will make me happy." The Prince afterwards admitted that he had, at the first moment, been staggered at her size.

The Dauphin did not live to see any of his children grow up. The eldest, afterwards Louis XVI, of tragic memory, was eleven, and the youngest, Elisabeth, a baby of a year old, when, after a long illness, the only son of Louis XV resigned his life.

In fifteen months the little Dauphine followed him to the grave, and again, in another fifteen months, the Queen Marie Leczinska, the most lonely wife and mother in all history, gave up a life that had long ceased to give or to promise any ray of happiness. Madame de Pompadour was dead also. The figure of the King is seen alone, in the vast galleries of his palace.

He was alone, in spite of the presence of four daughters, all that remained of his children. He

loved them in his own way, and now might have admitted them more and more to his private counsels. But the ineffectiveness that marked all their characters destroyed their chance of playing a great part. Bigoted and prejudiced, they were incapable of wide views. They were thus partly to blame for the advent of the triumphant Du Barry.

About the end of 1769, Marie Jeanne Vaubernier was introduced to the King. She was twenty-four years old, very beautiful, extremely vulgar, ill-mannered, uneducated, and of low birth. The King loved her with extraordinary passion. Long association with a woman of so remarkable a character, and so clever a head, as Madame de Pompadour, might have made Louis more fastidious in the choice of a companion. Where Pompadour had richness of nature and imagination, Marie Jeanne Vaubernier had nothing but frivolity and greed. Her strength lay in the fact that she could amuse the King, and that in her company, laughing at her fantastic childish tricks, or surprised by the fearless impudence of her familiarity, he could feel as if he belonged to her own class, which was the class that always attracted him. The reign of Du Barry [1] lasted till the King's death.

It will be realized that the Court at Versailles, under such auspices, was scarcely a suitable training-ground for the Children of France. The eldest of the group, the boy, duc de Berri, fated afterwards to reign as Louis XVI, was the favourite of his Aunt Adelaide.

[1] The poor woman eventually paid for her few years of supremacy with her life, but not till she had shown an unexpected nobleness of nature in acts of self-sacrificing devotion to the royal family in their distress. She offered them all her fortune and sold her jewels to help the Queen. She died on the scaffold in 1793.

She, the most spirited of the spiritless group of sisters, deplored the reserve and dullness of her eldest nephew. "Shout! Scold!" she urged. "Make an uproar like your brother d'Artois! Knock down my china and break it! Make some noise in the world!" As if haunted by some foreknowledge of the horrors that lay before him, the boy became more silent, more profoundly reserved. He felt himself plain and heavy, with no popular qualities like his brothers. After the death of his parents a desperate sense of loneliness assailed him in the crowded Court. "Whom shall I love here, where nobody loves me?" Poor *Loque* answered him as well as she could, giving him such wealth of indulgent love as her nature allowed.

Though so lacking in Bourbon charm, he had the Bourbon love of sport, and shared with his ancestors the mistaken idea that it could form the chief business of life. Then, at fifteen, came his marriage, when, for the last time, France, starving and bankrupt, flamed out into splendour of ceremonial—a flame now so soon to be quenched in blood. A valuable political alliance was secured by his marriage with one of the five daughters of Marie Thérèse of Austria, Marie Antoinette, who was then fourteen.

The marriage was solemnized in the King's Chapel at Versailles.

On 30 May the city of Paris gave a great *fête* in honour of bride and bridegroom. A show of fireworks was designed in the Place Louis XV. Some wooden scaffolding, erected for the firework display in the middle of the square, took fire. There was really no danger, but a sudden panic seized the crowd, and there was no authority ready to take control.

For half an hour the battle raged, the mass of struggling humanity swaying to and fro, killing and trampling upon each other. When the panic subsided and the crowd dispersed, a thousand dead were found and carried away to the Cemetery of the Madeleine.

The King never learned the truth; the full extent of the disaster and the number of victims was kept from him. Both the Dauphin and Dauphine were profoundly moved. The little bride, totally unnerved, continued to weep for days and could speak of nothing else.

This national disaster was an unfortunate beginning to their married life, which brought them, indeed, nothing but a long struggle, in one way and another, against adverse circumstances. Marie Antoinette was still a child, very wayward and fascinating, full of vitality and grace. The brothers and sisters of the Dauphin were still boys and girls. Marie Antoinette, as a wife, was supposed to associate more with the maiden aunts, Adelaide, Victoire, and Sophie. She was fond of them, but she shocked them continually with a light-hearted contempt for the solemnities of Court etiquette. Unconventional by nature, she would not be a martyr to decorum, and did not care who handed her a chemise when she dressed, who fetched a glass of water when she was thirsty, or whether the ladies in attending her wore the lappets of their head-dress pinned up or loose. The comtesse de Noailles, who was punctilious on all these points, she christened Madame Etiquette. Once, when riding at Trianon, Marie Antoinette was thrown from her donkey. "Run, run!" she cried, laughing, and still lying on the ground; "fetch Madame Etiquette, that she may

tell me what a Dauphine of France does when she falls off a donkey." She discarded the disfiguring hoop and heavy splendour of Court dress, wore muslins and light silks and affected an extreme plainness of garb. The royal aunts were in despair. The question of dress was only one of many deplored innovations. The Dauphine refused to be bound, in giving favours and forming friendships, by any laws of precedent; she saw nothing sacred in hoary hereditary customs, and swept aside, as egregious vanities, a hundred little ancient rules which seemed consecrated ritual to the three sisters.

The reign of Louis, *Le Bien-Aimé*, was drawing to a close. For a year he had suffered a deep melancholy, seldom rousing himself from a condition of drowsy languor. He went oftener than usual to the Convent of St. Denis to see his daughter, Louise, and became more scrupulous in devotional exercises. Nothing brought him any happiness or could lift the cloud of depression.

At Trianon, on 29 April, 1774, he became acutely ill and was carried to Versailles. In a few days small-pox of a peculiarly virulent type declared itself. So poisonous was the infection that fifty persons in the palace took the disease, though they were never in the King's room, and of these ten died.

Madame du Barry had the fortitude to watch by his bedside, from which all fled who could do so with any shadow of excuse. When the King was warned of his danger, about 4 May, he said to her:

"Madame, je suis mal; je sais ce que j'ai à faire. . . . Il faut nous separer . . .; soyez sur que j'aurai toujours pour vous l'amitié la plus tendre."

Then there crept to his bedside, never to leave it till the end, the only beings in the world who really

loved Louis. Eagerly solicitous, ready with every loving sacrifice, moved here and there about the death-chamber the grey silent shadows of his three daughters, Adelaide, Victoire, and Sophie.[1] The rules of her Order forbade Louise to come. She sent her crucifix, which the Pope had given her, to her father : he took it in his hands and said, " That is just like her ; thank her for me."

Quarrels and disputes surged outside, even to the very door of the sick-room, as to whether the Sacraments should be administered, and by whom. Louis, lying unrecognizable, a horrible vision with a black mask over the once beautiful face, was in a panic of superstitious fear. A sense of sin seized upon him. He sent a message of public repentance to his people. He confessed and reconfessed.

Louis XV died at ten o'clock at night on 10 May, 1774. There was a general flight from Versailles. Only the Captain of the Scottish Guard, who had the right to watch over the dead King, and one or two other officials remained. With all haste the body was hurried to St. Denis. Those who carried him thither were not even dressed in mourning.

" Te voila donc, pauvre Louis,
Dans un cercueil a Saint Denis !
C'est là que ta grandeur expire.
Depuis longtemps, s'il faut le dire,
Inhabile a donner la loi
Tu portais le vain nom de Roi
Sous la tutelle et sous l'empire
Des tyrans qui regnaient pour toi."

[1] The Court of France was the only one in Europe where the precaution of inoculation for smallpox was not in use. All three princesses developed smallpox a few days after the death of Louis XV, and Adelaide nearly died.

So was expressed the national feeling of France. Louis had long ceased to be the "well-beloved" of his people.

Yet there was mourning for even this outcast among kings. Beggared of all public respect, there burned steadily still in the hearts of his children the only steadfast affection he ever won.

"I love, and shall ever love till my dying day," wrote the holy nun of St. Denis, "a tender father, to whom I have owed my happiness all my life. . . . I hope that he is happy, or very soon to be so, and it is sweet to me to think that he is near me until such time as we shall be reunited in the bosom of God."

No laurels of glory and honour may be laid on the grave of Louis, but such words, sincerely spoken and believed, throw a veil of beauty over the blame and dishonour that disfigure the records of his life. A ray of warm human love falls across a despised and execrated memory.

CHAPTER XIV

CHILDREN OF ADVERSITY

THE apartments of the Dauphin and Marie Antoinette at Versailles were far distant from the room where the long reign of Louis XV drew painfully to its close. From their windows they looked across a wide space to the great range of state rooms, almost empty now, to watch hour by hour for a sign. In one of the King's windows a single candle was set burning, the signal that he still breathed. It was extinguished. In a moment the great corridors of the palace were thunderous with the stir of countless hurrying footsteps, eager men and women converging noisily from all quarters to the place where the new King and Queen, on their knees, and in tears, assumed the splendid burden of their new position. Louis was twenty and his wife eighteen years old. Their brief prayer was uttered in all sincerity :

" Help us, O God ! We are too young to reign ! "

The time was passed when all France turned in a passion of loyalty to acclaim a new king. The people had suffered too much and too long. The good qualities of Louis XVI failed to save the national respect for royalty, which, having already survived centuries of oppression and selfishness, was now nearly at an end.

MARIE ANTOINETTE AND HER CHILDREN
From the painting by Madame Vigée Lebrun at Versailles

By an ironic fate, the man who was to pay the price had none of the colossal faults of his Valois and Bourbon forerunners. Dull and heavy as a boy, Louis developed qualities in early manhood which brought his character within sight of the greatest of kingly ideals. He was capable not only of love for his people, but of love for humanity.

Sentiment and emotion dominated the girlhood of Marie Antoinette. Everything she did was prompted by the heart and not the head. She was unmeasured in her love, her pity, her dislikes, her wishes. Intensely human, with the ready sympathy, the quick response, the gift of understanding, and warm, impulsive expression that make a character irresistibly lovable, she wanted to remedy all distress. Like the gracious princess, Marguerite of Angoulême, of three hundred years before, " she had a smile for all, and held out her little hand to every comer."

Everything showed the freshness and gaiety of a new reign, though, in point of morals and decent behaviour, the courtiers had to reform their ways. In the brilliant Court no one troubled much about state affairs. An extraordinary ignorance prevailed of all conditions outside. Politics interested no one but the King and his Ministers.

The girl-Queen went in and out of the Council Chamber as she pleased, advising, dismissing, recalling, sometimes with good effect. But she understood nothing. Her education had been neglected, and she was too young to read the signs of the times by the light of her own intuitions. Almost from the first she was intensely unpopular as an Austrian. All her childish vanities, her wild spirits, her daring defiance of Court etiquette were taken up, repeated, and exaggerated.

She rose early to see the sunrise, walked late in the woods, indulged in the pastime of sleighing, and in an imprudent frolic one night drove her sleigh without attendants through the streets of Paris. Everything she did was misconstrued.

She chose her friends perhaps not very wisely, but according to impulses which sometimes showed insight. Chief among them in the early days was the Princesse de Lamballe, a young and pretty widow, who joined the Queen in many an escapade, perfectly innocent, but then thought wild and indiscreet. The character of the Princesse was slight, and the word silly best describes her. The Queen, after an absorbing intimacy, grew a little tired of her unvarying amiability.

But staunch to death in her love for the Queen, the Princesse rises into heroic prominence in the records of the Revolution, when she loyally laid down her life in the royal service.

A far better friendship for the Queen was close at hand, but in the early days of her reign her husband's sister, Elisabeth of France, eight years younger than herself, would seem in her eyes merely a child. Elisabeth had no brilliant qualities. In appearance she was small and insignificant, with irregular features and the large Bourbon nose. In character she was intensely loyal and true. She had lost both her parents when she was three, and all her affection centred in her eldest brother, the King. She would never marry. "I would rather remain here at the foot of my brother's throne than occupy that of a stranger." She never swerved from her chosen path, but devoted her life to Louis and his family. When acute distress overtook them, Marie Antoinette learned the value of such affection.

One undying memory belongs partly to these early days. Standing out nobly in the surroundings of the Queen, grave, self-controlled, gallant, the soul of honour, the Swedish gentleman, the comte Axel de Fersen, moves among the intrigues, the false estimates of morals, as one who had learned to know the true meaning of life, and was steadfast to a chivalrous code unknown to the lighter spirits of Frenchmen. His fine friendship, not untouched by high passion, inspired by Marie Antoinette, is a beautiful memory, crowned as it was by her own deep and tender interest. Fersen left the Court when his favour was at its brightest, and followed Lafayette to the wars in America. He returned in the midst of the thunders of the Revolution to render devoted service to the Queen and her family at great personal danger.

Existence at Versailles was a round of gaiety. Among the varied excitements offered by the life, the young Queen moved with the restlessness of an unsatisfied nature. She loved dancing, hunting, acting, or tried to love them so much that her real thoughts might be forgotten for a while. She tried to be absorbed in dress. The old days of simple taste were gone. Magnificence and variety, monstrous exaggerations and caprices, were invented by the milliners and adopted by the Queen at great expense. Still she longed for new emotions. Through all the history of Court life cards had played a leading part. She had once hated card games. Now she began to gamble, not heavily at first, but afterwards with total disregard for her own resources or those of the state. Horse-racing[1] was introduced

[1] The " Newmarket Français " was opened in 1775 at les Sablons. Only four horses ran; they belonged to the King's brother, d'Artois, the duc de Lauzun, the marquis de Conflans, and the duc de

into France. The sport appealed to her craving for excitement, and huge sums disappeared in following its fascinations. Jewels had always tempted her; she bought more and more, never troubled in these early days by one single thought of the selfishness and irresponsibility of her expenditure.

The young King could not be persuaded to put any check on her extravagance and caprice. "Let her be," was always his answer. He studied her character and understood her better as boyhood was left behind.

When at last, after eight years, the first child[1] came, the true womanhood of Marie Antoinette began to assert itself.

The story of the child's birth carries the mind back into the dark ages as far as medical science and the simplest rules of health are concerned. According to the ancient privileges of the nation, the populace was allowed to enter the palace and even the Queen's bedroom. Some enthusiasts climbed up the bedposts.

Chartres. Lauzun's horse was an easy winner, with an English jockey. The stakes were very small. A stand had been erected for the Queen, who witnessed the race, looking *belle comme le jour, et le jour était charmant.* She was delighted, and had the winning jockey presented to her.

[1] The following is a list of the children of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette :—

(1) Marie Thérèse Charlotte, *Madame Royale*, born at Versailles, 19 December, 1778; married 10 June, 1799, to her cousin, Louis de Bourbon, the duc d'Angoulême; died at Frohsdorf, 19 October 1851, leaving no children.

(2) Louis Joseph Xavier François, born at Versailles, 22 October, 1781; died at Meudon, 4 June, 1789.

(3) Louis Charles (Louis XVII), born at Versailles, 27 March, 1785; said to have died in the Temple prison, 8 June, 1795.

(4) Marie Sophie Hélène Beatrix, born at Versailles, 29 July, 1786; died at Versailles, 19 June, 1787.

All the windows were shut, and any possible breath of air excluded by paper pasted over all crevices. The Queen nearly died in a fainting-fit. The King had the sense to thrust his arm through a window, and this perhaps saved her life. The sex of the baby was a crushing blow to politicians and the country at large. "You are mine," said the young mother, who refused to be disappointed in the little atom of humanity; "had you been a boy you would have belonged to the state." This was little Madame Royale, the only one of the family who, after agonizing experiences, was to survive the Revolution.

The birth of a son followed that of Marie Thérèse in October, 1781. The King had issued orders that no one was to tell the Queen at first whether the baby was a girl or a boy, lest the joy or the disappointment might prove fatal! The anxiety of the mother in this doubt, prolonged for some time, was naturally great. She pleaded with the King, assuring him that she knew it was a girl. He yielded at last and gave the order, "Bring the Dauphin to the Queen." After eleven years the hopes of France were fulfilled in the birth of a direct heir to the throne. Little could the happy mother have dreamed that she would live to be thankful for the death of this precious child. He lived to be seven years old.

A very amusing pageant was arranged by the Parisians to celebrate this birth. In spite of the starvation and misery which then beset the city, the tradesmen went to Versailles in a body, each trade having its own troop with insignia, and a band of music. At the court of the palace they drew up. The butchers were there with a fat ox. The smiths carried a huge anvil, the chimney-sweepers an orna-

mented chimney, on the top of which was perched the smallest sweep obtainable. The locksmiths were sure of a good reception from the King, for the making of locks was the chief relaxation of his days. The guild of Versailles brought as a present a secret lock. The King wished to discover the secret himself, and was successful in doing so. At the moment the key was withdrawn a tiny baby, made of steel, dropped out of the keyhole. The chairmen had a gilt Sedan chair, in which was an effigy of a nurse and a little Dauphin. The shoemakers were busy fashioning a tiny pair of boots for the baby, and the tailors making his little regimental uniform.

The King came out upon the balcony and remained for a long time amused with this show. It was, however, not quite so complete as had been intended. The gravediggers had sent their deputation with suitable emblematic devices, a sight so horrifying to the feelings of Madame Sophie, the King's aunt, who chanced to see them first, that she had the unfortunate diggers sent away before they had taken their appointed place in the pageant.

The Queen received a deputation of fishwives and market-women. They appeared in black silk gowns and nearly all wore diamonds!

Marie Antoinette's third child, born in 1785, was Louis, duc de Normandie. The fourth and youngest was Sophie, born in 1786.

In early childhood the little group had a far happier fate than had fallen to the lot of most Children of France. In every way the welfare of childhood was more considered and better understood. The pictures of the boys and girls of the day show real youthfulness. They are not merely men and women in miniature.

The Queens of France in the past had found little time to spend with their children. Marie Antoinette had swept away in a mass the cumbrous claims of antique customs. She insisted on having time to lead her own life, to follow her own wishes. Politically a mistake, this determination made the freedom and happiness of her children. The whole family would leave the stiff splendours of Versailles and go joyfully to La Muette or to Trianon, the Queen's own little pleasure ground, where all etiquette was in abeyance. A simple country life was the rule there, artificial in character, with the model dairy, the stocked ponds, the planned groves and artistic wildness, yet giving the children the chance of leading the only life that was right for their development and happiness.

To Madame de Campan we owe one or two pictures of the life of the family in these early days.

"The Queen incessantly talked to her daughter, though she was yet very young, about the sufferings of the poor during a season so inclement. The Princess already had a sum of from eight to ten thousand francs for charitable purposes, and the Queen made her distribute a part of it herself.

"Wishing to give her children yet another lesson of beneficence, she desired me, on the New Year's Eve, to get from Paris, as in other years, all the fashionable playthings, and have them spread out in her closet. Then, taking her children by the hand, she showed them all the toys and dolls which were ranged there, and told them that she had intended to give them some handsome New Year's gifts, but that the cold made the poor so wretched, that all her money was spent in blankets and clothes to protect them from the rigour of the season and in supplying them with bread; so

that this year they would only have the pleasure of looking at the new playthings.

"When she returned with her children into her sitting-room, she said there was still an unavoidable expense to be incurred; that assuredly many mothers would at that season think as she did; that the toyman must lose by it; and therefore she gave him fifty louis to repay him for the cost of his journey, and console him for having sold nothing."

The Queen's little daughter, Madame Royale, was known by the nickname "*Mousseline la Sérieuse*," so sad was the expression of her childish face. Only a very few years later she was to win a more tragic title, "*L'Orphéline du Temple.*" The child was precocious, proud, perhaps even a little hard and arrogant. She had decision and independence of character. The great Napoleon in after years described her as "the only man of her family."

"My daughter, who is now six years old," wrote Marie Antoinette, "has rather a difficult character and is intensely proud. She feels far too strongly that the blood of Maria Theresa and Louis XIV flows in her veins. It is right she should remember it, but only to prove herself worthy of her descent. Gentleness is just as necessary, just as great a quality as dignity, and a haughty character is never beloved."

A contemporary writer has left a picture of the eldest boy.

"At two years old the Dauphin was very pretty. He articulated well, and answered questions put to him intelligently. While he was at La Muette everybody was at liberty to see him. Having received, in the presence of the visitors, a box of sweetmeats sent

him by the Queen, with her portrait upon it, he said: "Ah! that's mamma's picture."

"The Dauphin was always dressed very plain, like a sailor; there was nothing to distinguish him from other children in point of external appearance, but the cross of Saint Louis, the blue ribbon, and the order of the Fleece, decorations particularly belonging to his birth.

"The Duchess Jules de Polignac, his governess, scarcely ever left him for a single instant; she gave up all the Court excursions and amusements in order to devote her whole attention to the precious charge.

"A truly affecting trait is related of the young Dauphin, whom death snatched from us. The Prince always manifested a great regard for M. de Bourset, his valet de chambre. After falling into a state of weakness, from the sickness of which he died, he one day asked for a pair of scissors; that gentleman reminded him that they were forbidden. The child insisted mildly, and they were obliged to yield to him. Having got the scissors, he cut off a lock of his hair, which he wrapped in a sheet of paper: 'There, sir,' said he to his valet de chambre, 'there is the only present I can make you, having nothing at my command; but when I am dead, you will present this pledge to my papa and mamma, and while they remember me, I hope they will not forget you.'"

Fortunate in quitting the scene before the awful drama of his race, the first Dauphin has left no heart-breaking memories. But he was a miserably sickly, weakly little boy, who suffered from rickets. From the first it was clear that he stood no chance of living to grow up. His parents were passionately devoted to him.

The character of the second son of France, little Louis Charles, is summed up in one of his mother's letters.

"24 *July*, 1789

"In two days my son will be four years and four months old. . . . He is very impetuous and violent when his anger is roused, but he is a good child, gentle and loving when his passion is over. He has an inordinately good opinion of himself, which, if carefully guided, may turn to his advantage. He is perfectly faithful when he has promised anything, but he is too frank and often repeats what he has heard, sometimes adding details suggested by his imagination without the least intention of being untrue. . . . My son cannot read, and learns with difficulty; he is too heedless to be persevering. He has no thoughts of greatness in his head, and I hope this will long continue, for our children learn quite soon enough what they are. He loves his sister heartily."

The little sketch throws light on certain after events in the life of this most unfortunate child, in some degree explaining the part he was destined to play in the tragedy of his family.

Marie Antoinette looked upon the death of her baby in 1787 as the real beginning of all her miseries.

It was the first break in the family circle. The baby was only ill four days. The Queen suffered intensely. "I need all your heart to comfort mine," she wrote to Madame Elisabeth. Her ladies pointed out that her grief was extreme for a child only a few months old. "Do you forget that she would have been a *friend*?" the mother answered. Already she knew the cold sense of isolation in danger.

It was on the 4th of May, 1789, that the curtain rose

on the drama of the Revolution. It was the last day of the ancient monarchy of France. The power of the state passed from the hands of the King to the control of the people.

The King and Queen went in state to open the States-General. The procession began at the Church of Notre-Dame, at Versailles, and went to the Church of St. Louis. The King was surrounded by his household, the Queen by hers, and they were followed by the Princes of the Blood, all the nobility, the priests, the Archbishop with the Blessed Sacrament—two thousand in all, every one carrying a lighted candle. A vast throng of sightseers cheered or were silent as the great *cortège* passed. No one cheered the Queen, and the moment may have been bitter; but she is to be seen more as a mother than a queen. Upon the roof of a colonnade a little pallet bed was laid, covered with cushions, and down from thence, on the crowd and the procession, looked the wan face of the heir of France, the little disabled body stretched out, the listless eyes watching. The Dauphin was dying, and the mother's thoughts may be guessed as she looked up from her coach to that piteous little figure waiting for her smile. Full of compassionate love the smile was given, covering, as it best could, the breaking heart.

Just a month after the ceremony of the States-General, the King and Queen saw their boy die at Meudon. He was seven years old. Carried without pomp to St. Denis, the last of all his race to lie there among the kings, the little body was left in peace only three years.[1] The parents were overwhelmed

[1] The coffin of Louis Joseph was desecrated by the mob, and the body flung into a common trench on 16 October, 1793, the day of his mother's execution.

with grief. "How happy you are not to be a mother!" the Queen wrote to the Princesse de Lamballe. The King shut himself up and forbade anyone to approach him. But there was little leisure for the indulgence of private grief. Momentous events followed each other with bewildering haste.

On 14 July the fortress of the Bastille was attacked. It was guarded by eighty-two of the Invalides and thirty-six Swiss Guards. There were but seven prisoners there, and no attempt could be made to defend it. But, to the mob, the Bastille, with its cannon commanding the city of Paris, represented the unseen forces of tyranny. They hurled themselves upon it, as the only available object of revenge, levelling it to the ground and setting the prisoners free. The Governor and officers were murdered, and their heads carried on pikes through the city, amid frantic cries, "The nation for ever! The King for ever! Liberty for ever!"

After this popular outburst the King still blindly believed in conciliation. The Deputies of the National Assembly, whose council at Versailles the King and his brother attended, two days later, followed him to his quarters in the palace and asked to see the Queen and the new Dauphin.

An immense concourse of people thronged the courtyards, and the cry went up that the King and Queen should appear on the balcony with their children. They did so. Little *Mousseline la Sérieuse*, ten years old, and the Dauphin, only four, stood by their mother's side, viewing the surging crowds, listening to the shouts, not understanding anything, and not very much afraid, as they saw a smile on the Queen's lips, and did not guess its bitterness.

The event that brought the misfortunes of the royal family to a head was a scene at a banquet given, according to custom, by the King's Guards to a new regiment which had arrived at Versailles.

The Princesse de Lamballe has left an account of the affair.

"After we had dined, the Queen sent to the Marchioness de Tourzel for the Dauphin. When he came, the Queen told him about her having seen the brave officers on their arrival; and how gaily these good officers had left the palace, declaring they would die rather than suffer any harm to come to him or his papa and mamma; and that at that very time they were all dining at the theatre.

"'Dining in the theatre, mamma?' said the young Prince. 'I never heard of people dining in a theatre!' 'No, my dear child,' replied Her Majesty, 'it is not generally allowed; but they are doing so because the body-guards are giving a dinner to this good Flanders regiment; and the Flanders regiment are so brave that the guards chose the finest place they could think of to entertain them in, to show how much they like them: that is the reason why they are dining in the gay, painted theatre.'

"'Oh, mamma!' exclaimed the Dauphin, whom the Queen adored, 'oh, papa!' cried he, looking at the King, 'how I should like to see them!' 'Let us go and satisfy the child,' said the King, instantly starting up from his seat. The Queen took the Dauphin by the hand, and they proceeded to the theatre. It was all done in a moment. There was no premeditation on the part of the King or Queen; no invitation on the part of the officers.

"On the royal family making their appearance,

they were received with the most unequivocal shouts of general enthusiasm by the troops. Intoxicated with the pleasure of seeing their Majesties among them, and overheated with the juice of the grape, they gave themselves up to every excess of joy, which the circumstances and the situation of their Majesties were so well calculated to inspire. '*Oh, Richard! oh, mon roi!*' was sung, as well as many other loyal songs. The healths of the King, Queen, and Dauphin were drunk, till the regiments were really inebriated with the mingled influence of wine and shouting *Vivas!*

"The King and Dauphin were delighted; but the Queen, in giving Princess Elisabeth and myself an account of the festival, foresaw the fatal result which would ensue; and deeply deplored the marked enthusiasm with which they had been greeted and followed by the military."

It was this scene of enthusiasm, this symptom of reaction of public sympathy in favour of the royal family, that caused an outburst of fury at Paris, and made the Revolutionary leaders determine on getting the King and Queen, with their children, to the Tuileries and keeping them there.

Maddened by privations, the unredressed wrongs of centuries, the pressure of organized agitation, and the sudden passion for violence that has always been latent in a Parisian mob, an immense undisciplined rabble, the dregs of the people, the criminals, the drunkards, the insane, set out in confused ranks for Versailles. The eleven miles that separate the palace from the streets of Paris were covered with the straggling, shouting horde, slaves in the intoxication of loosened chains, vaguely determined to see the King

and Queen, and to kill them, or carry them away prisoners.

The Queen that day had gone to Petit Trianon. Her whole spirit was shaken, but she was still confident in the ultimate triumph of the King's cause, still believing that tranquillity would be restored. Imagination goes with the Queen on this walk, follows her tall figure drawing away, as she always loved to do, from the many voices, the ceremonies of Versailles, and attended by a single servant, going down from the terraces, across the park, and gaining the dear gardens of Trianon. There were directions to give the gardener for the coming spring, for it was now October. The colours had turned and faded. The sunless day showed no matchless autumn glories; the paths and glades were dank with falling leaves. Everything was desolate. The damp turned to rain—the sad, leaden rain of autumn. She sought shelter in her little grotto and sat there, alone with her thoughts. Trianon had been the home of her heart. She never saw it again. A messenger crossed the park, bringing her a letter:

"The people of Paris are in arms and on the march to Versailles. The town is in an uproar. The van of the procession is already in sight, on the road to the palace. Within an hour they will storm the gates."

She walked swiftly back across the park. The King had spent the morning hunting at Meudon, whence he had been hurriedly summoned. Madame Elisabeth came from her home at Montreuil. There was no confusion, no panic. Plans of escape were discussed, but the King rejected them all. He would countenance nothing that might lead to civil war.

At night Lafayette appeared with the National

Guard,[1] twenty thousand strong, and a crowd of rioters. He brought with him a sense of security. He assured the King of his safety, retired with his troops to the town of Versailles, and left the palace unguarded.

The Queen, without any sign of agitation, went as usual to her children's room and saw them safely asleep. She then retired and went to sleep herself.

At five in the morning every one in the palace was roused by shouts and cries outside the windows and the sound of guns firing. Very soon the noise was in the palace itself; the mob had broken in. The leaders stormed through the galleries and rooms, trying to find the Queen. The members of the King's body-guard stood to their posts. Two were instantly murdered, the others overborne and flung aside.

The royal family assembled in the King's room, only expecting the end. Then Lafayette appeared. "Madame," he said to the Queen, "the people call for you to come out on the balcony." She hesitated a single moment, and he added, "It is necessary to restore peace."

"Then I will go anywhere, even to death."

Levelled guns were threatening the windows of the palace, but she stepped out on the balcony in face of them, leading by the hand the little Dauphin and Madame Royale.

"No children! no children!" screamed a thousand voices. She gently pushed the little son and daughter into the room behind her, and with her hands resting

[1] The National Guard was formed from a citizen army created by Lafayette, and was intended to counterbalance the King's troops. Forty-eight thousand citizens enrolled in a single day. The enthusiasm spread all over France, and Lafayette found himself chief of an army of three million men.

on the iron balustrade of the balcony, faced death alone. The guns were lowered. Such courage carried weight even there. A cry went up, "*Vive la Reine!*" But the loyal cry was soon drowned in a hoarser shout, "To Paris, to Paris!" For that these ragged hordes of humanity had trudged the long miles to Versailles. They would not go back without their prey. There was no choice left. Conquerors for the moment, everything was in their hands.

Louis came out and joined the Queen on the balcony. They stood side by side while he called to the mob, "We will go to Paris!" For the last time the pair are seen at liberty; from thenceforth till death they were to be prisoners. And this moment, when personal liberty was swept away, when they stood helpless in the whirl of adversities, was the great moment when all their noble qualities leapt into view, never to be obscured. Through all time they stand there to stir the wonder of humanity: Louis, who had been commonplace, inert, unprincely, dull of understanding; and his wife, who had been pleasure-loving, indiscreet, proud, self-willed. Faced with the threat of instant death, with the loss of everything that had made life dear, they are suddenly transformed into immortal heroic figures, beyond pity, beyond blame, tranquil, dignified, valorous—as high above the common ruck of humanity as beings from another world.

Happy for them and for their children, happy for France, from whose story the stain of their long torture can never be effaced, could swift death have overtaken them in that exalted moment. But the sudden merciful death was withheld. The lowered guns were not lifted again. No hand was raised to kill. They were to drink to the depths the cup of their martyrdom.

The royal carriages was brought, and at one o'clock began one of the most dreadful journeys that history records. It lasted for six hours. The King and Queen, with the two children, the King's brother, d'Artois and his wife, Madame Elisabeth, and Madame de Tourzel, were in the first coach. Their suite and servants followed. Then came a hundred of the Deputies of the National Assembly, and the Parisian army brought up the rear.

Round the King's carriage, which could only proceed at a foot's pace, the worst of the mob jostled and pranced. The lowest offscourings of the people, both men and women, leered in at the windows, and kept up a fusillade of insulting and deafening cries. " We shall no longer want bread ! We have the baker, the baker's wife, and the baker's boy with us ! "

The advanced guard was formed of the ringleaders, and these carried on pikes the still dripping heads of the King's murdered body-guards.

The two little children were witnesses of all this horror—snatched in a moment from the innocent play that was all their experience, and thrust into acute danger, into the sight of blood, the sight of murder, the sight of uncontrolled hatred. The dread journey came to an end at last. Utterly exhausted, the royal party was escorted to the Tuileries.

The palace of the Tuileries had been deserted by the Bourbons for nearly seventy years. There was very little furniture there. The first night there were no beds for anybody but the two little children.

In the morning there was still noise and confusion in and about the palace, and hoarse hostile voices crying outside. The little Dauphin, bewildered by late events, asked his mother, " Is to-day still yesterday ? "

Looking about on the very dull surroundings, which were in great contrast to the luxury he had known, the little boy said, " Everything is very ugly here." The Queen replied, " Louis XIV lived here, and we must be satisfied with what was good enough for him."

There was no privacy. Anyone walking in the gardens of the Tuileries could look in at the windows. During all the first day the Queen went repeatedly to the windows to speak to the hordes of excited women who had helped to bring her to the Tuileries. Even these hearts were won by her unconquerable gentleness and patience. They begged for the ribbons she wore. As the days passed, she was left more in peace.

Life went on at the Tuileries according to the usual routine, with daily lessons. The little girl and boy would not realize that they were prisoners. The winter went by. In the summer, permission was obtained from the Government for the removal of the whole party to the retreat of St. Cloud.

It was almost the last glimpse even of pretended liberty. The next year permission was again obtained for the Court to leave Paris, but the populace surrounded the royal carriages in the streets on their way to St. Cloud. Led by the National Guard, the more furious spirits levelled muskets at the King, and attacked his attendants. It was impossible to proceed, and the royal party endured the humiliation of returning to the Tuileries as prisoners in the hands of the mob.

" It was on this occasion," writes the King's brother, the comte de Provence, " that I first saw my niece in her true colours. . . . She was then twelve years old, and stood alone in the centre of this miserable circle. Her expression as she flitted from her father's side to

her mother or her aunt, showed that she was well aware of her position, but rose above it; tears were in her eyes, but her lips were smiling. Her innocent caresses, her tender thought for us all, and her comforting words were as balm upon our wounds. When she came to me I clasped her in my arms, 'Oh, my child, may Heaven give you all the happiness that is denied to your unhappy family.'"

The acute danger in which the royal family stood was now very fully revealed. Plots for escape were formed. One of these took definite shape. It was resolved by the King to take advantage of the devotion of his friends, and escape to the Flemish frontier. Once out of France, all the powers of Europe would rally to his call.

The day fixed was 20 June, 1791. The King and Queen held the usual evening ceremonies, and went to bed. When all was quiet in the palace, the Queen rose and awoke her children.

"They dressed my brother as a little girl," writes Madame Royale; "he looked beautiful, but was so sleepy that he could not stand, and did not know what we were all about. I asked him what he thought we were going to do: he answered, 'I suppose to act a play, since we have all got these odd dresses.'

"At half-past ten, when we were all ready, my mother[1] herself conducted us to the carriage in the middle of the court, which was exposing herself to great risk. Madame de Tourzel, my brother, and I got into the carriage; M. de Fersen was the coachman.

[1] Madame Royale's memory failed her in this particular. The Queen did not go with her children to the carriage. The delay in starting the coach was caused by her losing her way on foot between the Tuileries and the Place du Carousel.

" To deceive anyone that might follow us, we drove about several streets; at last we returned to the Little Carousel, which is close to the Tuileries. My brother was fast asleep in the bottom of the carriage, under the petticoats of Madame de Tourzel. We saw M. de Lafayette go by, who had been at my father's *coucher*. There we remained waiting a full hour, ignorant of what was going on; never did time appear so tedious. Madame de Tourzel was to travel under the name of the Baroness de Korff; my brother and I were to be her two daughters, under the names of Amelia and Aglae; my mother was to be Madame Rocher, our governess; my aunt a female companion called Rosalie, and my father was to be our valet de chambre, under the name of Durand. At last, after waiting a long hour, I observed a woman loitering about the carriage. I was afraid that we should be discovered; but I was made easy by seeing our coachman open the carriage door, and that the woman was my aunt; she had escaped alone with one of her own attendants. In stepping into the carriage she trod on my brother, who was lying in the bottom of it, and he had the courage not to cry out.

" My aunt told us that all was quiet, and that my father and mother would be with us presently. My father, indeed, arrived very soon after, and then my mother, with one of the body-guards who was to accompany us. We then proceeded and reached the barrier without any event: there a travelling-carriage had been prepared for us, but M. de Fersen did not know where it was, so that we were obliged to wait a long while, and my father even got out to look for it, which alarmed us very much. At last M. de Fersen found the other carriage, and we got into it. M. de

Fersen took leave of my father, and made his escape."

"When once we have passed Châlon," the King said, "we shall be safe."

At places on the route troops were sent to meet them. The long delay in starting had thrown the plans into confusion, and the troops never found the royal carriage. All the preparations were carelessly made and clumsily carried out. The only matter for wonder is, that the royalties ever got as far as Varennes.

The journey, as far as the children were concerned, was no terrifying flight. It was amusing to be dressed up, to see the parents acting the part of servants, and Madame de Tourzel assuming authority. A certain fatal leisureliness had marked every stage of preparation for the flight, as if the gravity of the situation was never fully grasped. At the long, steep hills the lumbering coach stopped, and Madame de Tourzel would get out with the children and let them walk up. The King walked too. He stood chatting at the post-houses, and talked to peasants by the way. During the drive there was much cheerful conversation, future plans were discussed, little jokes were made.

At Sainte Menehould, where the horses were changed, a man, Drouet, a keen Revolutionary, son of the local postmaster, caught sight of the King's face and recognized him. Instantly he resolved on betrayal. He rode across country to Varennes, which was to be the fugitives' next post, and gave the alarm.

Varennes was a miserable little place. The inhabitants, in a state of great excitement, awaited the King's carriage, which was confronted by a barricaded bridge. The threatening crowd surrounded the carriage, and the King and Queen were obliged to get out and

take refuge for the night in a grocer's shop. All hope was really at an end. Drums sounded, alarm bells rang, a tumultuous crowd of peasants surrounded the house where they were imprisoned. This humiliating siege had to be endured for eight hours.

It is the first sight of Marie Antoinette in sordid surroundings. Realization that all the mock simplicities she had affected at Trianon had been the merest pretence was thrust upon her during those hours in the upper chamber of the grocer's shop, when, after she had put the children to sleep, she leaned on a package of tallow candles, and passed the night in agonized discussion on possible means of escape, with Madame Sauce, the grocer's wife. Early in the morning a decree came from Paris, ordering the return of the King and his family.

All got into the carriage again, and the return journey was accomplished, but in the midst of open hostility and insult in every village passed.

Two noted Revolutionaries, Barnave and Pêtion, were sent as commissioners from the National Assembly in Paris, to bring back the fugitive royalties. These men insisted on sitting in the already crowded coach.

The children must have shared the discomforts and the dire sense of tragedy on this journey. They were witnesses of the flaming anger, the tears, the despairs, and Marie Thérèse was old enough to be alive to the burning hostility which greeted them on all sides; but the little Dauphin sat on his mother's knee and played with the buttons on Barnave's coat. The child was very proud of being able to make out the motto stamped upon them. "It says, 'We will live free or die,'" he said. Barnave, completely enthralled by

the mother's charm, made much of the boy. On their return to Paris, reinstated at the Tuileries, the position of the King and Queen was greatly altered for the worse. They were never allowed to forget that they were prisoners.

A ceaseless watch was kept over all their movements at the palace. An officer spent each night in an arm-chair before the open door of the Queen's bedroom.

The Princesse de Lamballe was on her way to England when she heard of the arrest at Varennes. The Queen, who knew what her impulse would be, wrote entreating her not to come back to the Tuileries, but she was not to be persuaded. She hurried thither.

All Court privileges were abolished. There was actual danger and no advantage in remaining in the royal service. Many of the most trusted attendants forsook the Tuileries. The Queen's circle became daily smaller.

The Assembly submitted a new Constitution to the King. Everything to do with rank and privilege was abolished ; titles, ceremonies, Court customs were swept clear. The Deputies of the Assembly did not even rise when the King entered the Hall. Lafayette, Barnave, and others who supported the monarchy, advised Louis to ratify the Constitution. On 14 September, 1791, the King went to the Assembly to take the oath of fidelity.

A few days later, on the Champ de Mars, the new Constitution was solemnly proclaimed. An immense crowd gathered. Many thought it was the end of the Revolution ; there were *fêtes* and illuminations. The royal family, from whom the Constitution had wrested every shred of power, was expected to share in the rejoicings. Louis and Marie Antoinette, with

the two children, drove through the garlanded streets, escorted by the National Guard, at a foot's pace. The dense crowd round the carriage shouted, "*Vive le Roi!*" but "*Vive la Nation!*" was the counter-cry. The Queen held the little Dauphin high in her arms that every one might see the rosy, blue-eyed, laughing boy.

For a few months, after the King had accepted the Constitution, no increasing rancour was shown against him. A little more liberty was allowed. The Queen drove out daily with the children.

Even in these dark days of humiliation and surrender, she must have known happiness and pride in her children, and especially in the Dauphin, with his boyish beauty, his cleverness, and his loving ways. No Child of France shows a more engaging personality than Louis Charles, who was destined to so appalling an end. His mother had always busied herself with every detail of his play, his work, and his health.

Unconscious of danger and sorrow, the little Dauphin contrived to have a great deal of enjoyment at the Tuileries. He had his own little garden,[1] a strip of land between the palace and the Seine. Here he planted and dug. There was also a summer-house, and he had chickens and ducks of his own. He used to go to this little garden every day under military escort. The soldiers adored him. The supreme joy was to get up early and go to the garden to pick a bunch of flowers for his mother.

[1] This same little garden which Louis XVI gave to his son, was given by Napoleon to the little King of Rome, by Charles X to his grandson the duc de Bordeaux, and by Louis Philippe to the comte de Paris, so that it belonged in turn to four boys all destined to lives of misfortune.

He would creep very quietly to her bedside and lay the little bouquet close to her pillow. She was always supposed to be asleep. Then he would go and hide himself. Presently the mother would pretend to stir in her sleep, open her eyes, and see the flowers.

" My little son is somewhere near," she would say. Then he would rush joyfully out of his hiding-place. The same little comedy delighted him every day, and was doubtless equally appreciated by Marie Antoinette.

Some attendant was so totally lacking in imagination as to ask the child why he picked his bouquet and brought it to the Queen, pointing out that she had always plenty of other flowers.

" She likes mine best," was the confident and true reply.

The Assembly had now almost complete power in France. The King signed everything he was asked, and, at command, declared war against Austria, who, with Prussia, had demanded that Louis should be restored to the full privileges of his throne, and that the Church money should be returned to the Church. Three large armies were dispatched to defend the frontiers.

So far, the King had made no stand, but the next suggested step he refused to take. The Assembly proposed to declare all the emigrant nobles of France traitors, to seize their property, and to arrest all the clergy who did not submit to the new Constitution. The King refused to sanction such rank tyranny.

Urged by the Assembly, the Parisian mob rose, and headed by a violent republican named Santerre, forced a way into the Tuileries.

Armed with knives, scythes, pikes, any weapon that came to hand, the surging crowd of maddened

creatures assembled at the Place de la Bastille, and, rushing to the palace, burst through all barriers and flung into the King's presence. This was the riot of 20 June, 1792.

He met them like the King he was, without fear. His body-guard induced him to take shelter in the deep embrasure of a window, behind a barricade of furniture. The intruders, pressing upon him, insisted that he should put on the Red Cap of liberty, and he did so, knowing how little it meant, how little it mattered one way or the other. He put it on at command, and forgot to take it off.

The Queen had tried to join the King, but was forcibly kept back by her attendants. " My place is with the King ; I must die by his side."

" Your place is with your children," was the reply. She was in the Salon Louis XIV, and the two children with her. A huge table protected them, but the furious mob surged into the room, insulting, threatening, mocking.

The Dauphin sat on the table. The women in the crowd could not help admiring the beautiful little boy. Some one cried to his mother, " If you love the nation, put the Red Cap on the head of your son ! "

The Dauphin was a little frightened—he clung to her, but seeing her smiling, let her put the Red Cap on his curls. It was Santerre himself who removed it.

The riot lasted all day.[1] It was night before the

[1] The great Napoleon was a witness of the riot. " On the 20th June I was in Paris," he writes, " and I saw the populace marching upon the Tuileries. . . . When I was told that Louis had put the Red Cap of liberty on his head I came to the conclusion that he had ceased to reign, for in politics there is no resurrection."

last of the drunken crew was persuaded to leave the wrecked palace.

When the mob had gone, some of the Deputies remained in conversation with the Queen. Utterly worn out as she must have been at the close of such a day, she summoned her old attraction, the persuasive charm that had won so many hearts, and that availed her so little, to try to win these men. It was impossible for her to refrain from drawing them into sympathy. After so many hours of heroic courage, she showed herself not as a queen, or as an injured woman, but simply as a mother. "Will these gentlemen come and see me put the Dauphin to bed?"

The child slept in a little room that opened into her own. The Deputies followed her and saw her go through the little ceremony. The Dauphin was very tired, for it was long past his bedtime.

"Tell the gentlemen you love the nation, darling."

"I love the nation," said the Dauphin, half asleep.

But though the grace of Marie Antoinette might enthral a group of Deputies, there was no hope of any reaction in her favour from the national councils of France. If help came, it must be by the intervention of the powers of Europe. The dwellers in the palace knew no moment of peace and security, and the bloodless riot of 20 June was followed by the great and bloody insurrection of 16 August, 1792, which finally extinguished all glimmer of hope for the monarchy.

The story of that outrage, the confusions of that terrible day, have been told and retold. Disentangling the part played by the Children of France, it is possible to catch sight here and there, amid the blood and thunder, the brutal strength and passionate ex-

pressions of the frantic mob, of their frail forms and their innocent faces.

The brother and sister must have been asleep when the alarm bell pealed at midnight and the palace awaited the attack. There was some sense of security, for the devoted Swiss Guards were on the alert, guarding the palace, and the National Guards were thought to be loyal. Surely the disorganized rabble of townspeople could be repulsed. Shots began to be heard and a growing tumult in the streets. At daylight the children were awake and dressed. They went with the King and Queen into the garden, where some regiments of artillery were to be reviewed. There was no loyalty there. Some of the soldiers shook their fists in the King's face. He was pale, but perfectly calm. Both he and the Queen expected almost instant death.

The mob broke into the precincts of the palace at about eight o'clock. There were no soldiers among them, or any guns. Within the courtyard were the thousand Swiss Guards, immovable, waiting to do their duty. A sound of an immense tumult grew and swelled. The King, the Queen, and their children, Princess Elisabeth, Madame de Lamballe, and Madame de Tourzel, abandoned their rooms on the first floor, where they could no longer be protected. "We shall come back," the Queen said. In reality they were leaving the palace for ever under a strong escort; they crossed by the garden to the Parliament House, where they were for the moment safe. The King walked in front, down the broad path. The Queen followed, holding the Dauphin by the hand, who kicked at the dead leaves. He seemed tired, and one of the escort, a Grenadier, picked him up in his

arms and carried him till the whole party reached the Hall of the Parliament, where, though the crowd surged to the very doors, they were assured of protection. The King took up his usual position beside the Speaker. The whole party could not sit through the debates, and therefore they were escorted to a box or gallery, where the official reporters always sat to make their shorthand notes. It was an unventilated little place, and grew intolerably hot. There the Queen and her children, with Madame Elisabeth, spent the day. At nine o'clock they heard the firing begin.

The fight was soon a massacre. One of the finest things in history is the steadfast defence maintained by the Swiss Guards, till one by one they were murdered at their posts. Everything was over by ten o'clock. The King himself signed the order for capitulation. The Tuileries was in the hands of the mob. The French monarchy, so many centuries old, was a thing of the past.

Hour after hour the little party in the suffocating reporters' box waited and agonized. The whole dread day passed, the little boy lying exhausted on his mother's knee, asleep now and then. At two in the morning relief came. Under the same strong escort, the royal party was hurried across the garden to the shelter of the deserted Monastery of the Feuillants.[1] The Dauphin woke in the cool air. "I am to sleep in mamma's room to-night." The treat had been promised him, because he had been very good, and it did not trouble him that his mother's lodging for the night was only a dark and deserted cell.

[1] The Monastery of the Feuillants, and the Riding School, which was then used for the meeting of the National Assembly, were situated on the space now made into the Rue de Rivoli.

Three days were passed in this way—by day in the stifling reporters' box, listening to the debates of the Parliament as to their custody, by night in the dank corridors of the monastery. It was understood now that the struggle was between the City and Parliament—each desiring to be responsible for the captives. The City triumphed, and decreed that the place of detention should be the Temple. On 13 August two great coaches, the last vestiges of the royal equipage they were ever to see, were brought to carry them thither. The distance from the Monastery of the Feuillants to the Temple was something over a mile. The journey occupied two hours, so dense was the mass of people, so impassable the streets. The statue of Louis XIV lay fallen in the Place Vendôme. Throughout the city, by order of Authority, the statues of all the Kings were overthrown. The air was full of cries of triumph, the confused noises of a whole populace in furious excitement.

As the great state coach moved heavily forward, the two little children, frightened and bewildered, sat watching their parents, who did not speak any more to them or to each other. Louis and Marie Antoinette sat silently side by side, driving together for the last time through their city of Paris. Everything had been wrested from them. There was nothing left but to obey, to bow the head to the great storm that was carrying them whither they knew not. Their voices were still now, with the exalted stillness of souls that summon from the depths of being their last reserve of fortitude.

CHAPTER XV

THE TOWER OF THE TEMPLE

LOUIS XVI, with his family, reached the palace of the Temple at seven o'clock in the evening of 13 August, 1792.

The whole palace was illuminated for their reception, as it had often been before, when the King's brother, the comte d'Artois, whose residence it was, had given splendid entertainments there to please Marie Antoinette.

The Temple consisted of two buildings. There was the palace itself, and standing in the garden, at a distance of two hundred paces, a great square mediæval tower, with a round turret at each corner. It was 150 feet high, with four stories, supported in the middle by one great pillar from the foundation to the top. The whole area was not more than 30 feet square. The building was centuries old, and had been the head-quarters of the Knights Templar. Another and a later building had been added to the square tower, much lower and smaller. It looked like a little house leaning against the massive keep.

It was at first thought that the palace itself was to serve as the royal prison, but late at night the family, after partaking of a ceremonious supper, provided by the Commune, was conducted across the garden to the

THE TOWER OF THE TEMPLE
From an engraving in the Carnavalet Museum

smaller tower, which was the only part that was furnished. Nothing was ready for them there. The little Dauphin was overcome with sleep, but it was eleven o'clock before Madame de Tourzel could get a bed made up for him. Madame Elisabeth slept in a disused kitchen. A few attendants had been allowed to follow the family, such as the children's nurses, the Queen's maids, and the King's valets. The Princesse de Lamballe, faithful in adversity, remained resolutely at the Queen's side.

Better arrangements were soon made for the comfort of the prisoners, but at the best the quarters available were cramped and inadequate. The walls of the tower were nine feet thick, and the windows so small and dim, that the prisoners were obliged to inquire daily of their guards as to what kind of weather prevailed outside.

It is possible that the first days in the Temple, when for the first time Louis and Marie Antoinette, captives so long, realized what captivity meant, brought a sense of relief. It was a shelter after the acute dangers, the public rage, the insane hostility, flaming into bloodshed, which had surged round the little group for three dreadful days and nights. Here at least they were protected, and, except for the distant clamour of the streets, there was respite from the ceaseless noise. There was no further need for rapid judgment and decisive action. The quiet was almost like peace.

For the children's sake it was essential to keep terrors and anxieties in the background. An appearance of order and routine must be maintained.

After the personal attendants of the family had been removed, Marie Antoinette attended to the children herself. The pictures of the proud and

beautiful Queen dressing the Dauphin, hearing him say his prayers, arranging his little lessons and his games, mending his clothes, are the most appealing of any that her story shows. The instincts of wife and mother rose above the old false traditions of royal life, for these were the dominant instincts of her nature. She was greater here than in the old surroundings, much more noble, much more rare. Once, she had tried to create the simplicities of home among the artificial splendours of the Court. Now, in the midst of crushing anxieties, she was called upon to give to cramped and sordid surroundings the dignity and tranquillity of home. It is the measure of her womanliness that she succeeded.

" We all passed the day together," records Madame Royale. " My father taught my brother geography ; my mother, history, and to get verses by heart ; and my aunt gave him little lessons in arithmetic. My father had fortunately found a library, which amused him, and my mother worked tapestry.

" The Municipal officers were very familiar, and showed little respect even for the King : one of them always kept sight of him.

" My father asked to have a man and woman sent in to do the coarser kind of menial work.

" The night between the 19 and 20 August, a new order of the Commune directed the removal from the Temple of all the persons who were not of the royal family.

" MM. Hue and Chamilly were removed from my father, who remained alone with a Municipal officer. They then came down to carry away Madame de Lamballe. My mother strongly opposed this, saying (what indeed was true) that this princess was of the

royal family; they nevertheless carried her away. My aunt went down with Madame de Navarre and Pauline de Tourzel; the Municipal officers promised that these ladies should return when they had been examined. My brother was taken into his mother's apartment, that he might not be left alone. The Queen could not tear herself from the arms of Madame de Lamballe. We embraced all these ladies, hoping, however, to see them again next day, and we all four passed the night without sleep. My father, though awake, also remained in his bed-chamber, and the Municipal officers never left him. Next day, at seven o'clock, we learned that the ladies would not return to the Temple, and that they had been taken to the prison of La Force; but we were very much surprised, at nine o'clock, to see M. Hue return, who said that the council-general of the Commune had pronounced him innocent, and sent him back to the Temple. After dinner, Pétion sent a man of the name of Tison, and his wife, to do the coarse work. My mother took my brother into her own room, and sent me with my aunt into another. We were only separated from my mother by a little room, where a Municipal officer and a sentinel were placed. My father remained above stairs. Having learned that they were preparing another apartment for him—which he by no means wished for, because he would be thereby still farther removed from his family—he sent for Palloi, the foreman of the labourers, to prevent the work being proceeded with; but Palloi replied insolently, that he received no orders but from the Commune.

"We went up every morning to the King's apartment to breakfast; and afterwards the whole family

returned to the Queen's, where the King passed the day. We went every day to walk in the garden, for the sake of my brother's health, where the King was always insulted by the guard. On the feast of St. Louis, at seven o'clock in the morning, 'Ca Ira' was sung under the walls of the Temple."

The first days in the tower were not all dark. Hope was strong still in the hearts of the captives. The Allied Powers of Europe were going to invade France. All this adversity would come to an end. The infuriated people would awake from their madness.

In spite of all the precautions of their guards, news from outside reached the prisoners now and again. The invaders were meeting with success. Longwy was taken by the Allies. Verdun had surrendered. The spirit of the Revolution, thus threatened, rose into frenzy. The frightful events of 2 September were the result : events a thousand times worse than the noisy insurrections that had twice overwhelmed the Tuileries. Republican authority lost all sense of justice, all pity, all decency. To find any parallel to the horrors, we must go back to the Eve of St. Bartholomew. Like that tragedy, the event was inspired by panic. The dread " Committee of Public Safety " was formed, and wholesale arrests and imprisonments began. The gates of the city were closed, that no one suspected as an enemy of the Republic, or as friendly to the monarchy, might escape. For the frightful scenes that followed, Marat must be held guilty as the first instigator. Danton claimed to have been chief actor. " I looked my crime steadfastly in the face," he said, " and I did it." Graves were dug, executioners hired. At seven prisons in Paris a mock

tribunal was set up. One by one the prisoners were brought out and swiftly questioned. As they passed out from their judges into the courtyards of the prisons, assassins were waiting for them. From prison to prison the band of murderers went. In two days a thousand prisoners were murdered. The massacre continued for four days; the number of victims will never be known. On 3 September the prison of La Force was visited. There the Princesse de Lamballe had been shut up when she was removed from her attendance on the Queen in the Temple. Her fate was decided long before she appeared before her judges. Hurried like the others into the courtyard of the prison, she was instantly struck down and her body mutilated by the frantic crowd. Her head, with its long fair hair powdered and the face rouged, was carried by the mob on a long pole to the walls of the Tower of the Temple and there held up before the windows that the Queen might see.

Everywhere the peasants had risen against the nobles. Everywhere the guillotine was set up; everywhere the red tide of terror and blood lust rose.

Louis XVI never had any doubt as to how things would end for himself. He faced death, as he had always faced danger, with immovable calm. With measured words, with unaltered mien, he watched his children at play, walked with them in the garden, taught his little son, talked gently to his wife and sister. In the evening there was music, a game of backgammon or "*tric-trac*." For the sake of the children the prison was made, not a scene of lamentation, but a place of quiet routine. No unkingly word ever came from the lips of the prisoners of the Temple,

no outcry upon Fate, no frenzied prayers, no impassioned appeal.

> "Out of the night they spoke,
> Defeated creatures who had suffered wrong
> But were still noble underneath the stroke."

On 29 September, Hébert, the extremist of the extreme party, entered the apartments of Louis and read an order that he was to be separated from his family, and shut into a different set of rooms. Knowing that the move meant some disaster, the King suffered the parting in bitter grief. The Queen could neither eat nor sleep for her distress. Soon the meaning of the new tyranny appeared. The King was to be brought to trial.

Marie Antoinette was allowed no communication with her husband, except for one brief note he sent her at the dreary Christmas time. Still order and routine were maintained in her tiny household. She had her children, her beloved Elisabeth, the daily occupations; they made even a little music.

The King's trial was going on. News of his condemnation and of the death penalty pronounced, reached the prison on 17 January, 1793. The sentence was read to the King, who received it calmly. He was denied any respite.

"About seven o'clock in the evening," writes Madame Royale, "we learned the sentence by the newsmen, who came crying it under our windows. A decree of the Convention permitted us to see the King. We ran to his apartment, and found him much altered; he wept for us, and not for fear of death; he related his trial to my mother, apologizing for the wretches who had condemned him; he told her that it was

proposed to attempt to save him by having recourse to the primary Assemblies, but that he would not consent lest it should excite confusion in the country. He then gave my brother some religious advice, and desired him, above all, to forgive those who caused his death; and he gave him his blessing, as well as to me.

"My mother was very desirous that the whole family should pass the night with my father; but he opposed this, observing to her how much he needed some hours of repose and quiet. She asked at least to be allowed to see him next morning, to which he consented. But, when we were gone, he requested that we might not be permitted to return, as our presence affected him too much. He then remained with his confessor till midnight, when he went to bed. He slept till he was awakened by the drums at five o'clock. At six, the Abbé Edgeworth said Mass, and administered the holy sacrament to my father. At nine o'clock he left the Temple. . . .

"He met one of the turnkeys, whom he had reprimanded rather sharply the day before: he now said to him, 'Mathieu, I am sorry for having offended you.' On his way to the scaffold, he read the prayers for those at the point of death. On the scaffold, he wished to have spoken to the people; but Santerre prevented him by ordering the drums to beat: what little he was allowed to say was heard by very few. He then undressed himself without assistance. His hands were tied, not with a rope, but with his own handkerchief. At the instant of death, his confessor exclaimed, 'Son of St. Louis, ascend to heaven!' He received the stroke of death on Sunday, 21 January, 1793, at ten minutes past ten o'clock in the

forenoon. Thus died Louis XVI, King of France, at the age of thirty-nine years, five months, and three days, of which he had reigned eighteen. He had been five months and eight days in prison."

The immense wave of her grief did not overwhelm the spirit of Marie Antoinette. She had been all wife, all mother. Now she was a mother still. On the night following the King's execution, sleepless herself, she watched the slumbers of the little Dauphin. As she bent above his cot she was heard to murmur that he was now of the same age as his brother Louis Joseph, when he died at Meudon, more than three years ago. She dared not let her thoughts go forward. "Those who die earliest are the most blessed," she said. She must have died of grief had she been unable to occupy those dark hours with the pathetic routine of family cares within those narrow walls, the daily duties to her children, the Dauphin's little lessons, the reading, the needlework, the music that helped to make home even here. Stricken to the soul, she could still spend herself in personal service for those she loved.

One of the warders of the Temple prison, Lepitre, has left a clearly cut picture of one scene.

Some one had written a song for the Dauphin, after the King's execution. The warder got the song conveyed to the prisoners. A week later, Marie Antoinette called him into the room occupied by Madame Elisabeth, and there he heard the children play and sing it. The song was called "La Piété filiale."

"Des maux que ton fils a soufferts
Pourquoi te retracer l'image ?
Lorsque ma mère les partage
Puis-je me plaindre de mes fers ?"

"The daughter of Louis XVI sat at the harpsichord,

and beside her was her mother with her son in her arms, trying, in spite of her tears, to direct the children's playing and singing. Madame Elisabeth stood beside her sister. . . . Never will this picture be effaced from my memory."

In the midst of her own pitiful desolation the Queen tried to comfort the children. "My son," she said to the little boy, "you should think of the good God." "I have thought of Him," said the child, "but when I try to think of God, it is always poor papa who comes before my eyes."

The one thing impossible to the Queen's fortitude was to pass the closed door of the King's apartments, which were below her own. She therefore never walked in the garden again. Her guards found a place on the leads of the tower, where the family could at least get air, and thither the little group went every day.

After a time the Queen's imprisonment became more rigorous. Robespierre made demand for her trial. The Reign of Terror was at hand.

On 20 April, in the night, Hébert appeared with his companions and for five hours ransacked her apartments. The Dauphin was ill, but he had to be lifted from his bed, that his mattress might be searched. From Elisabeth they took her pencil and her sealing-wax, with a little sacred relic she cherished, and a prayer for France.

All the world outside was in the grip of the Terror. The names of Danton, Marat, Robespierre, pronounced in agony or in triumph, were on every lip. Thousands of innocent men and women were dying on the scaffold all over the realm.

All France did not submit to the ghastly tyrannies

of Robespierre without a struggle. The peasants of La Vendée, in Brittany, armed themselves, and, in the name of the monarchy, kept up a gallant warfare against the republican troops. Ultimate defeat was inevitable. Fifteen thousand of these brave men and women were ferociously executed at the close of 1793. To the prisoners in the Temple, this heroic stand of La Vendée on their behalf brought only a deeper touch of tragedy. In that loyal corner of the kingdom the boy Louis Charles had been hailed as Louis XVII. The title so given, and so maintained with their blood, irritated the Revolutionary despots to further fury.

On 1 July it was decided to take the Dauphin away from the Queen, in order that he might be brought up to forget his royal traditions. On 3 July this inhuman order was carried out. The authorities sent six of the Municipal officers to remove the child. It was at night. Marie Thérèse was reading aloud from a prayer-book by candle-light, to her mother and Madame Elisabeth, who were mending the children's clothes. The little Dauphin was in bed and fast asleep. His mother had hung up a shawl to keep the light from his eyes.

The men tramped into the quiet room.

"We have come by order of the House to tell you that the separation of Capet's son from his mother has been voted."

The Queen stood by the little bed and defended her child. She defied the order, reasoned, entreated, implored mercy. For the first time she threw aside her proud reserve and fought strenuously against her fate. Surely God would not permit her to be tried beyond what she was able to endure! Surely, in a flood of passionate pleading, she could move the hearts

of these men, human creatures like herself! The noise awoke the child, who saw the strangers, and clung to his mother.

"Why will you make this scene? No one wants to kill your son! Let him go freely; we could take him, if you force us to that!"

The Queen knew then that she had failed, and that God required this final sacrifice of her will. She lifted the child from his bed, dressed him, and kissed him for the last time on earth. She let him go.

Sometimes she saw him still in the distance. Feeble, ailing, nervous, she saw him on the roof, playing at ball, when his jailers took him there for air. She lived for these chances of a distant glimpse of this dear child.

Madame Royale, the little girl, has left a picture of the distracted sorrow of this time.

"We often went up to the tower, because my brother went there too from the other side; the only pleasure my mother enjoyed was seeing him through a chink as he passed at a distance. She would watch at this chink for hours together, to see the child as he passed. It was her only hope, her only thought."

The boy had been given into the care of Simon, a shoemaker, and his wife—a coarse, uneducated pair, utterly unfitted to have the charge of the sick child. Dreadful legends have grown up about active ill-treatment and neglect.

The authorities stooped to inflict all kinds of small torments on the bereaved mother.

"Before she had left the Temple, they came to ask her for the Dauphin's clothes. She expressed her wish that the son of Louis XVI should not cease to wear mourning; but the first thing Simon did was to take away his black coat."

The last time she saw him was in the distance, on 30 July, two days before she was taken away to the Conciergerie. His jailers had cut off his hair ; he was wearing the Red Cap of liberty. She heard his voice for the last time. He was singing a revolutionary song.

The corroding sorrow was not of long duration. On 1 August, one month after the boy was taken away, the decree went forth that the Queen herself was to be brought to trial. On the 2nd she was taken to the Conciergerie. When they summoned her she answered no word. She went neither gladly nor sorrowfully, with serene good-byes to her daughter and to Elisabeth. She could not feel any more at the moment ; she had endured everything. The full cup brimmed and could hold no more of any bitter draught.

Her prison room at the Conciergerie is still to be seen, but so altered that the visitor to-day can form little conception of the sordid meanness of it. There was no privacy ; day and night a man sat in the corner of the cell. There was nothing to do, no resources to dull her thoughts. She wished to knit some stockings for her little son, but the needles were not allowed.

Her jailers were gentle There were women here not afraid to show her kindness : Madame Richard the wife of the porter and a servant girl, Rosalie, who did what they could. Under their sympathetic service, thought and feeling woke again in her numbed soul.

Madame Richard had a little boy, Fan-fan, the same age as the Dauphin. He was allowed to see the Queen ; she talked to him of her son, but she could not control her emotion as she did so. So despairing were her tears that, in mercy, the child was kept out of her sight.

The Dauphin's little glove, with a miniature and a lock of his hair inside, hidden in the bosom of her dress, she cherished as the last treasures left to her. Everything else was taken from her. She used to hide behind her little truckle bed, in order to look at and handle these pitiful possessions.

It was 12 October when Marie Antoinette was led from her cell to go through the first formalities, and on the 14th her trial began.

Through two dreadful days she sat in the large hall of the Conciergerie, before the Revolutionary Tribunal. She waited there in her widow's dress and cap, friendless, white-haired, pale, her bearing still marked with the majestic distinction of the old days, answering clearly and steadily the torrent of bewildering and grotesque questions. There she heard the accusation against her, which had been obtained by threats and atrocious treatment from her little boy of eight years old; there she won the momentary reaction in the crowd in her favour, alarming her accusers, who had decided on her death, by her one passionate moment: "I appeal to all mothers here." She had the strength and serenity of one who has given up all hope and has nothing left to fear. Her accusers kept her before them all night. Asked if she had anything to say, she replied: "For my defence, nothing; for your remorse, much. I was a queen, and you dethroned me. I was a wife, and you have killed my husband. I was a mother, and you have torn my children away from me. There is left only my blood; make haste to shed it, that you may be satisfied." The sentence was pronounced at four in the morning. She left the hall with a firm step.

In her cell, the condemned woman wrote a

letter[1] to Madame Elisabeth. Marie Antoinette had done with life, but she passed her last night on earth in writing the letter that throbs in every line with life, and all that life meant to her. Moving a profounder emotion than pity, it is one of the great letters of the world, one of the immortal expressions of the spirit of man which, as long as there are human hearts to suffer and understand, will always command response. Written in the prospect of immediate death, in all the passionate sincerity of such a moment, it is a woman's letter to a woman, irresistibly human in its appeal, as it pleads for compassion for the little children she must leave.

" 16 *October*, 4.30 *a.m.*

" It is to you, my dear sister, that I write my last letter. I have just been sentenced, not to a shameful death,—that is only for criminals,—but to go and rejoin your brother. Innocent as he was, I hope to be able to show the same fortitude in my last moments. I am calm, like all those whose consciences do not accuse them. It rends me to the heart to leave my poor children. You know that I only lived for them and for you, my dear sister : you, who for friendship's sake have sacrificed all in order to remain with us. And in what a condition do I leave you ! I was told during my trial that my daughter had been separated from you. Poor child ! I dare not write to her ; she would not receive my letter. Accept my blessing for both my children. I hope that some day, when

[1] The letter never reached Madame Elisabeth. It fell into the hands of Robespierre, and after his death remained among his papers till 1815. The Government of Louis XVIII bought the letter. It was ordered to be read in all the churches on 16 October of every year.

they are bigger, they will be brought back to you and appreciate your loving tenderness towards them. May they both remember what I always told them, that strict attention to duty is the best safeguard of our life, and that their love and confidence in each other will bring them happiness. I wish my daughter to feel that because she is the eldest she ought always to help her brother with her counsel and experience. May her love to him make this clear. I trust that my son will always treat his sister with the care and attention born of love. . . . May my son never forget his father's last words, which I emphatically repeat: 'Let him never try to avenge our death.'

"I must mention one thing to you that gives me pain. I know the child has often caused you sorrow. Forgive him, dear sister; think of his tender years, and how easy it is to force a child to repeat words and even name things he does not understand.

"A day will come—I hope so—when he will appreciate more fully your piety and tenderness.

"It now remains to me to confide my last thoughts to your care. . . . I die in the Catholic Apostolic Roman faith, which was my father's, in which I was brought up, and which I have always recognized. I look for no spiritual comfort, for I do not know if there are any priests of this religion, and besides, this place would expose them to far too many dangers. From the bottom of my heart I pray God to pardon all the sins that I have committed since I first saw the light. I hope that He in His goodness will hear my last prayers, as well as those I have sent up to Him for months past, to entreat Him to receive my soul for His loving-kindness and mercy's sake.

"I beg all those whom I know, and you especially,

dear sister, to pardon all sorrow I have unknowingly caused you. I forgive my enemies their sins against me. I say farewell to my aunts and all my brothers and sisters. I had friends, and the thought of leaving them and their griefs, is one of the greatest sorrows that death can cause me. They must at least be told that I thought of them when death was near.

"Farewell, my true and well-loved sister! May this letter reach you! Think often of me. I embrace you and the poor children with all my heart. My God! what pain it is, to leave them for ever! . . . Adieu, adieu!"

So her voice ceases. The paper is stained with her tears, but they are the last she ever shed. She had borne stupendous sorrows with unshaken dignity and patience. Now the end was at hand and found her ready. There was no need to strive further; she had only to take up the challenge and achieve the last victory of courage.

Collected, exalted, tranquil, she awaited the summons, and, quitting the shelter of her prison, mounted the cart, faced the immense clamour of the thronged streets, and went bravely up the steps of the scaffold.

Immeasurably greater in death than in any phase of her storm-tossed life, one of the immortal figures of the world's drama, she passed to her Calvary.

In the distant Tower of the Temple the Queen's children may have heard the prolonged shouts in the streets, but no tidings were suffered to penetrate there.

The two daughters of France and the young King, a dwindling shadow in the dark corners of his prison, were now all that remained in the realm of the once

worshipped race, the only representatives of the ancient Kings whom the will of the people had hedged round with Divinity so closely through centuries of loyalty and patience.

Even these poor children of adversity were not to be allowed to creep with their sorrows into obscurity. Two of them were still to die, and only one frail creature was to be left to face life, with its dark memories, out of the whole group of prisoners in the Temple.

Madame Elisabeth, and her niece Madame Royale, were not told of the execution of the Queen. Their imprisonment became more rigorous. Confined in a single room, the order was given that no one was to enter this room, and that their food and drink was to be supplied to them through a sliding panel. This order was not carried out. The officers on duty continued to visit them three times a day, and food was brought in the usual way. The two ladies busied themselves with housework, glad to have some simple duties to perform. Nothing but the strictest necessities were supplied, and no servants waited upon them.

Sometimes they heard the childish voice of the Dauphin singing the " Carmagnole " and the " Marseillaise." The child was stationed at the window to sing, that the guards might hear him. His sister says in her memoirs that he was taught a great deal of bad language, and that his treatment was horrible. It must, of course, be remembered that Madame Royale had no standard by which to judge how a child should be reared, except the royal plan, which was to surround the son of a king with a watchful luxury and adoring consideration. She knew nothing of the children of working people and the roughness of their

lives. Louis XVII had been handed over to a peasant, who was instructed to bring him up as his own son. A drunken and ignorant man, there is no positive evidence to show that Simon treated the little prisoner otherwise than with the rough discipline and fitful kindness he would have shown one of his own children. Naturally it was an abrupt change for the child, who was undoubtedly in ill-health. Simon's idea of kindness was the idea of a peasant—to give a great deal of food to eat, and wine to drink. His standard of cleanliness would be of the lowest. He could not train the child in habits that lay entirely outside his own experience. The boy, in his quiet way, was fond of Madame Simon. She stood sometimes between the drunken wrath of Simon and the frail child, precisely as a thousand working-class mothers interpose daily between a tipsy husband and an unoffending son.

When in the care of these people, the child had sufficient food, kindly, if ignorant, attention from la Simon, and toys to play with. Already mentally unstable, he soon seemed to forget his mother and sister and all the influences of his past life. It was natural that the young plastic mind should take on the colours and impressions, even the coarse speech and manners, of his surroundings, which were sordid and brutal compared to anything he had known. The worst is still to be told. Everything was done to corrupt his mind. Hébert had conceived an idea of getting the child to accuse his mother. He could only be brought to this by a general weakness and corruption of his whole nature. Morally irresponsible, his understanding darkened, the feelings entirely blunted, he was fit, when Hébert and his confederates came to the Temple, to do their infamous bidding. He spoke as

they told him, he signed where they bade him. That moment marked not only the supreme tragedy of his life, and that of his mother, but also the limit of wickedness to which human nature can sink. It is the blackest deed of history.

When once this infamy was accomplished, Hébert had no further use for the Queen's son. His captors ceased to pervert his mind. Small indulgences were granted. Barelle, a stone-mason, who was one of the Municipal officers, befriended him. The little daughter of the laundress, a child of his own age, was allowed to play with him. No one told him of his mother's death. He was spared the blow. Some of his captors, in spite of all, showed humanity and sympathy.

In the lumber-room of the Tower a mechanical toy was found. It was a canary that sprang out of a little box and sang a tune called "The King's March." The toy was put in order and given to the captive. The child's delight was so great that a friend, to please him still further, brought him some real canaries in a cage, and from thenceforth his great pleasure was the care of these birds. In order to distinguish them, he tied a piece of pink string round the leg of one canary.

The sequel to this incident shows the ludicrous depths to which the false revolutionary spirit could lead, the childish superstition that had succeeded the lofty ideals of Mirabeau and Lafayette. It will scarcely be believed that some Municipal officers, paying an official visit to the "little Capet," expressed grave dissatisfaction that he should be allowed to play with a toy-bird that sang a Royalist song. Moreover, it was decided that the pink string round the canary's leg was a "decoration," and as such conveyed an idea of

distinction and privilege " foreign to the spirit of the Republic " ! The child himself must have laughed at the triviality, even while he wept at the tyranny that took his birds and his toys away.

" On the 19th January 1794," writes Madame Royale, " we heard a great noise in my brother's apartment, and we guessed he was going to be removed from the Temple. . . . We saw several parcels carried away. . . . But it was Simon who was gone. Obliged to choose between the situations of Municipal officer and guardian of my brother, he had preferred the former, and they had the cruelty to leave the poor child absolutely alone."

For many years Madame Royale believed this. She learned what is probably the truth, as a sworn secret, in her later life, and knew that in one of the parcels she had seen carried away from the Tower was the pitiful little body of her brother, going to its secret grave.

The Convention did not know what to do with the children. To keep them in captivity meant to retain a constant source of disorder and agitation in the country. To banish them was to yield a dangerous power into the hands of foreign enemies, and to give a rallying-point to the enemies of the Republic.

M. Joseph Turquan, in a recent work, " Du nouveau sur Louis XVII," [1] offers proof that the boy was killed in the Temple on the evening 19 January, 1794; that he was buried secretly in the dry moat of the Temple; that a boy of his own age, a deaf mute, and incurably

[1] The present writer adopts M. Turquan's view of the tragedy of the Dauphin in the Temple, as the one out of a mass of theories that most clearly explains the mystery. It is the most probable of all the stories. Almost all commentators are agreed that the mute and imbecile boy who died on 8 June, 1795, was not the son of Louis XVI.

ill, was brought to the Temple in his place, that he might die a natural death there; that Madame Royale afterwards knew the whole truth. The skeleton of a boy was found by some prisoners, in 1801, in the dry moat. It had been covered with lime. There was nothing by which it might be recognized, but the bones must have been secretly buried, and were those of a child of the little King's size and age.

One thing is historically clear — his death was necessary to the state. There was no sense in killing Louis XVI and allowing Louis XVII to live. It was hoped that the rough treatment he had received in his delicate state would quickly put an end to the whole problem. He proved tougher than was expected, and did not seem likely to die. Even the Terror, though it had committed a far worse crime against him, would not see a child of nine years old brought to the guillotine. He was none the less condemned to death. In those days of social confusion, of frequent disappearances, it was not an impossible thing to find a substitute for the dead Prince—some boy from a hospital who was certainly dying, and would die silently in his cell.

It is said that Simon one day asked one of his superiors:

"After all, what do they want to do with him? To exile him?"

"No."

"To kill him?"

"No."

"To poison him?"

"No."

"What, then?"

"To get rid of him."

It is more than probable that Robespierre gave orders to Chaumette and Hébert to get rid of the

child. When the deed was done, the next thing was to silence the murderers. Among the thousand sudden accusations and executions of the hour it was not difficult. Two months after the secret crime, Hébert went to the guillotine, and three weeks later Chaumette followed. Probably all the Hébertistes were tried and condemned for this sole reason, that Hébert might be silenced. Simon himself was hurried to the guillotine in July, 1794.

Every precaution was taken that no one who had known the Dauphin should ever see the boy who was now shut up alone in an almost dark room. All regular attendants at the Temple were removed, and four guards, who were changed every twenty-four hours, were in charge of the little prisoner, but no one ever entered his cell. The order was given that under no pretext were the royal brother and sister to be allowed to meet. They were not to see each other even at a distance. To let the eyes of the girl rest for a moment on the face of the boy would be to destroy in a moment all the carefully built plot. All would be lost in her first exclamation: "That is not my brother!"

Many have accepted the theory believed at the time by Madame Royale,[1] that it was indeed the little King Louis XVII who was pushed into a den and left

[1] There can be little doubt that some one, perhaps on a death-bed, directly or through a priest, told her of the death of her brother by violence on 19 January, 1794, after exacting a solemn vow of secrecy. When the Bourbon Kings came back to France, Marie Thérèse revisited the Temple. Only the site was there. Napoleon had swept into oblivion both the Palace and the Tower, with all their dire memories. She caused to be planted on a certain spot close to the site of the prison a weeping willow and a cypress, and had the space fenced. Men thought she was commemorating those years of tragic captivity. In reality she was marking a grave.

there for six months, and that, shut up in a cell, without attention of any kind, without fresh air, with hardly any light, this child who all through his short life had been so anxiously tended, and who was already sick in mind and body, lost his hold, inch by inch, on sanity and life. His faculties became inert and atrophied. It was but a scrap of wrecked humanity, pitiful and vacant, that was left at last to receive a little tardy kindness and to look again upon the light. A thousand times better to believe that his life came to a sudden end at the hands of Simon, than to be haunted by the thoughts of his having endured these months of martyrdom utterly alone. But even then only another conclusion is reached equally heart-breaking. A little forsaken child, whether a king or some obscure diseased outcast from a public hospital, did endure those months of awful silence, in the fetid atmosphere and blank loneliness. The creature that emerged at the end of six months bore no resemblance to the pretty, eager boy of Versailles or the Tuileries.

However, the boy, whoever he was, still lived, and the French Government was thrown by that fact into great embarrassment in 1794. Every one ardently desired peace, a cessation of the terrible wars within and without, the possibility for the people of life again under normal conditions. At last Spain made overtures of peace to the Republic. One of the conditions, however, was that Louis XVII and Madame Royale should be sent safely to the care of the Spanish King. The King of Sardinia refused to hold peace negotiations with France unless the royal children were given up. The French Government was in a difficulty. How could they give up a Dauphin with a sister who did not recognize him ? The real Dauphin lay in his grave

in the moat, and the peace proposals, so essential to France, could not be entertained as long as the false Dauphin remained alive. The Committee of Public Safety temporized uneasily. The poor boy solved the difficulty by dying a natural death at last on 8 June, 1795. A month later the relieved Republic made peace with Spain, and Madame Royale, the last survivor of the prisoners in the Temple, was released.

Most tragic, most illusive, of all names in history, the little King Louis XVII has left but few memorials of his life and mysterious death.

In the armoury of the Hôtel des Invalides in Paris is a child's sword, bearing the following inscription :—

" This sword belonged to the son of Louis XVI. He was a King without a crown, and died without a grave. Fate decreed that he should own a sword. He was the descendant of mighty Kings, but he never fought, except against Simon, whom he disarmed by patience."

The last of her family, the little Orphan of the Temple, endured a fate only a little less terrible than that of her brother. She outlived every one that she loved. The companionship of the gentle Madame Elisabeth was all that was left to her. That, also, she was to be called upon to surrender.

It was at night that Elisabeth of France heard the summons—a loud knocking at the door of the cell where both prisoners were preparing for sleep. A man entered.

" Citoyenne, will you kindly come downstairs ? "

" And my niece ? "

" She will be attended to afterwards."

" I shall come back," said Madame Elisabeth to the child.

" No, Citoyenne, you will not come back."

Madame Elisabeth was brought to trial next day.

" They condemned her to death. She asked to be placed in the same room with the other persons who were to die with her. She exhorted them with a presence of mind, an elevation of soul and religious enthusiasm, which fortified all their minds. In the cart she preserved the same firmness and encouraged and supported the women who were with her. At the scaffold they had the barbarity to reserve her for the last. All the women, in leaving the cart, begged to embrace her. She kissed them and kindly said some words of comfort to each. Her strength never left her, and she died with all the resignation of the purest holiness.

" Marie Philippine Elisabeth Hélène, sister of Louis XVI, died on the 10th May, 1794, at the age of thirty years. . . . I saw in her nothing but love of God and the horror of sin—religion, gentleness, meekness, modesty—and a devoted attachment to her family ; she sacrificed her life for them, for nothing could persuade her to leave the King and Queen. She was a Princess worthy of the blood to which she belonged."

The bitterness of death to her lay in the fact that she left Marie Thérèse alone in the Temple—a young girl, without a single woman to attend her, and practically in solitary confinement. No news of any kind was allowed to penetrate to her prison. Utterly alone, without guidance, without comfort, without human companionship, she lived through long months of cruelly close captivity.

After the fall of Robespierre, and the end of the Reign of Terror, the National Convention, while

negotiating for her exchange with French prisoners in Vienna, saw fit to provide the Princess with a companion. Madame Chanterenne was sent to the Temple. It was the first breath that had reached the young girl from the outside world for many dark months. The eagerness of the first breathless questions, and the tragedy of the low-spoken replies, may be imagined.

"What of my mother?"

"You have no mother."

"And my aunt?"

"She is dead."

"And my brother?"

"He died a week ago."

The Orphan of the Temple[1] stood on the threshold of her prison. Life, light, liberty, were given her again, all of little value now. It was three years since she had entered the Tower of the Temple. She was rich then, in spite of the agitations of her young life, a much-prized daughter and sister. She came out of captivity with everything struck from her—parents, brother, friends, home, faith in human pity, and trust in human justice. She was seventeen years old, and she had gathered experiences which left shadows dark enough to overwhelm a long life. From these grim walls, from the mob-ridden courts of Versailles, from the guarded galleries of the Tuileries, from the gutters of Varennes, she had amassed a throng of pitiful memories that nothing could ever efface. She stepped forth into liberty, into the blank

[1] Madame Royale left the Temple on 18 December, 1795. She took refuge with her mother's relations at Vienna. In 1799, at Mittau, she married her cousin, Louis Antoine, duc d'Angoulême, the son of the comte d'Artois (afterwards Charles X). Nearly the whole of her life was passed in exile. She was left a widow in 1844, and lived until 1851. She left no children.

desolation of the world, old and experienced in sorrow.

There was now no Child of France left. The Orphans of the Temple were the last who could lay claim to the ancient beautiful title. Other children of the royal race of Bourbons were again to inhabit the palace of their forefathers, but the unbroken tradition, the unchallenged Divine Right, was nothing now but a memory and a dream. Later royal children were the children of the French nation, chosen and supported by the will of the people. The Kings and the Children of France were gone for ever.

Not to these poor lost atoms, tossed on the angry sea of a nation's revolt, could be revealed the meaning of their martyrdom. It must have seemed that France herself had fallen. But France, even through the frantic confusions of the later days of the Revolution, still kept the exalted passion of her spirit. Out of the void and the chaos rose one man, created by the need of the hour, immeasurably great, who, with the tools of military despotism, was to mould the nation into another form of beauty and order. The unique genius of Napoleon was to attempt the redemption of France.

In the rapid survey of the centuries, many troops of little children have gathered and gone past, some leaving no mark save a bare name in a state document, a chance entry telling of a baptism or a death. Those of the earlier days can never be anything but faint outlines, taking a dim colour and life from some tender allusion in a letter, or from a casual expression in some ponderous record, which gives them shape.

Delicate forms, illusive as dreams, they are scarcely noticed in the imposing procession of great men who,

all down the ages, in an unfailing succession, make the splendour of the story of France. One after another they go past in the dazzling pageant—soldiers, statesmen, philosophers, poets, patriots—their torches flooding the path with a blaze of light. The Children of France are lost in the glory. It is difficult to single them out of the obscurity, to give them life and personality.

Silently the generations pass on. The phantoms of the children are clearer now. They stand in a sharper light, definite, living, loving creatures, whose voices can be heard calling and singing. They have watched the activities of the old world drop away and become only wistful memories. They have lived through immense changes in the national life and in the thoughts of men. All unknowing, in their tragic destiny, the last Children of France have witnessed the greatest event that the long centuries have brought, not only to France, but to all the world, the regeneration of a people.

Although burdened with a thousand dark and bitter memories, the story of the past must become more and more sacred as it sinks deeper into the eternal keeping of the ages. The old griefs are forgiven as they are seen in relation to the moulding of the race. The Children of France, links in the unbroken chain, claim their places in the pageant.

Crowned with the sovereignty of so many shining names, the France of to-day, her eyes fixed on God's future, may spare a tiny niche in the shrine of her history for the frail and appealing figures of the little children of her sad and glorious past.

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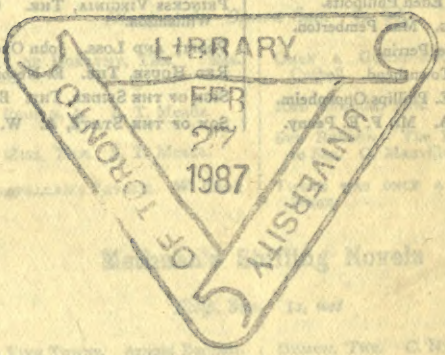
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